Ranger Rick's nature magazine

May 1979

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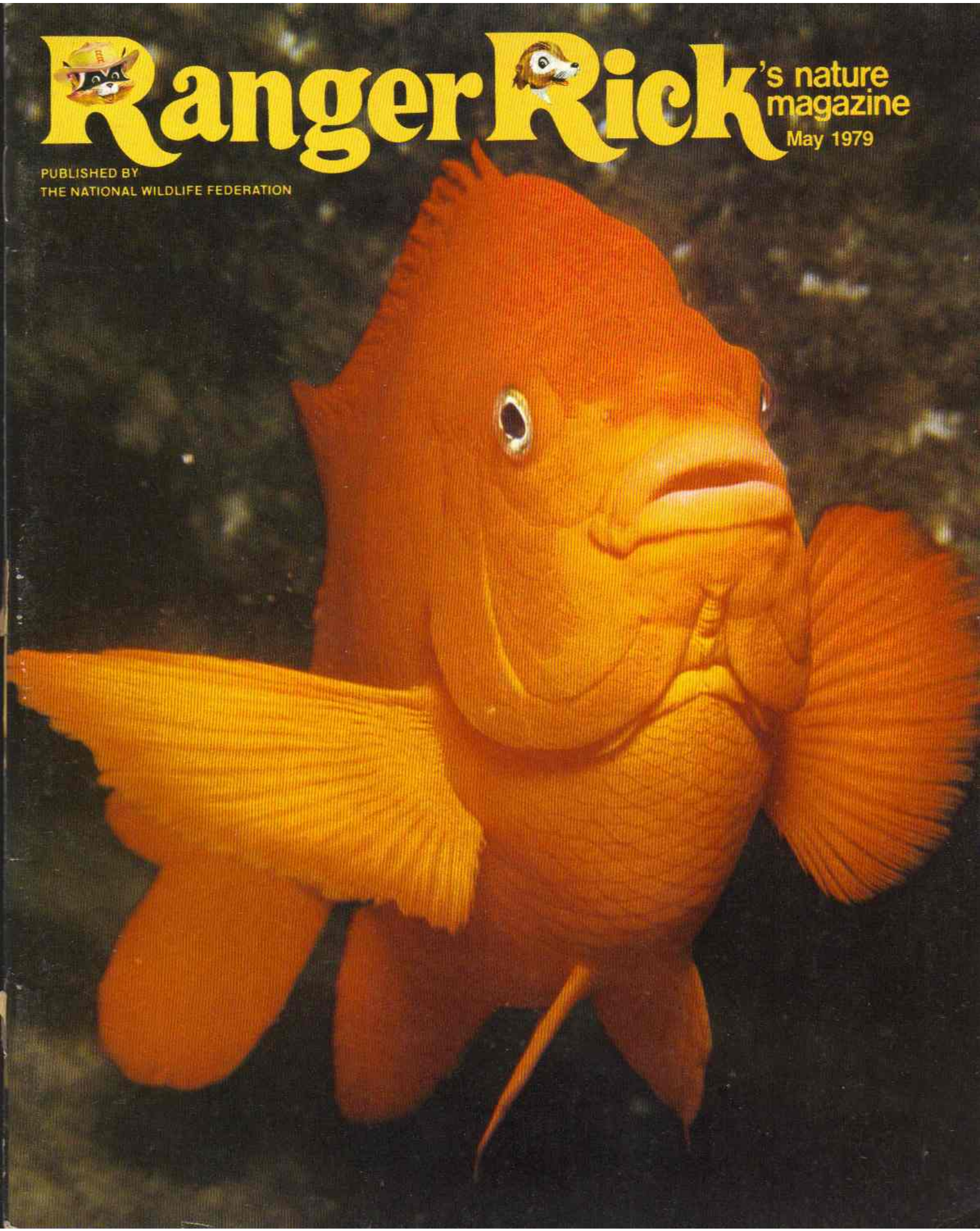

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Cover credits: Garibaldi by Douglas Faulkner; Underwater Photographer by Ron Church/ Tom Stack & Assoc.
Page 3—Alaskan Brown Bear by Len Rue, Jr.

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RANGER RICK'S PLEDGE

I give my pledge as a member of Ranger Rick's Nature Club

To use my eyes to see the beauty of all outdoors.

To train my mind to learn the importance of nature.

To use my hands to help protect our soil, water, woods and wildlife.

And, by my good example, to show others how to respect, properly use and enjoy our natural resources.

_____

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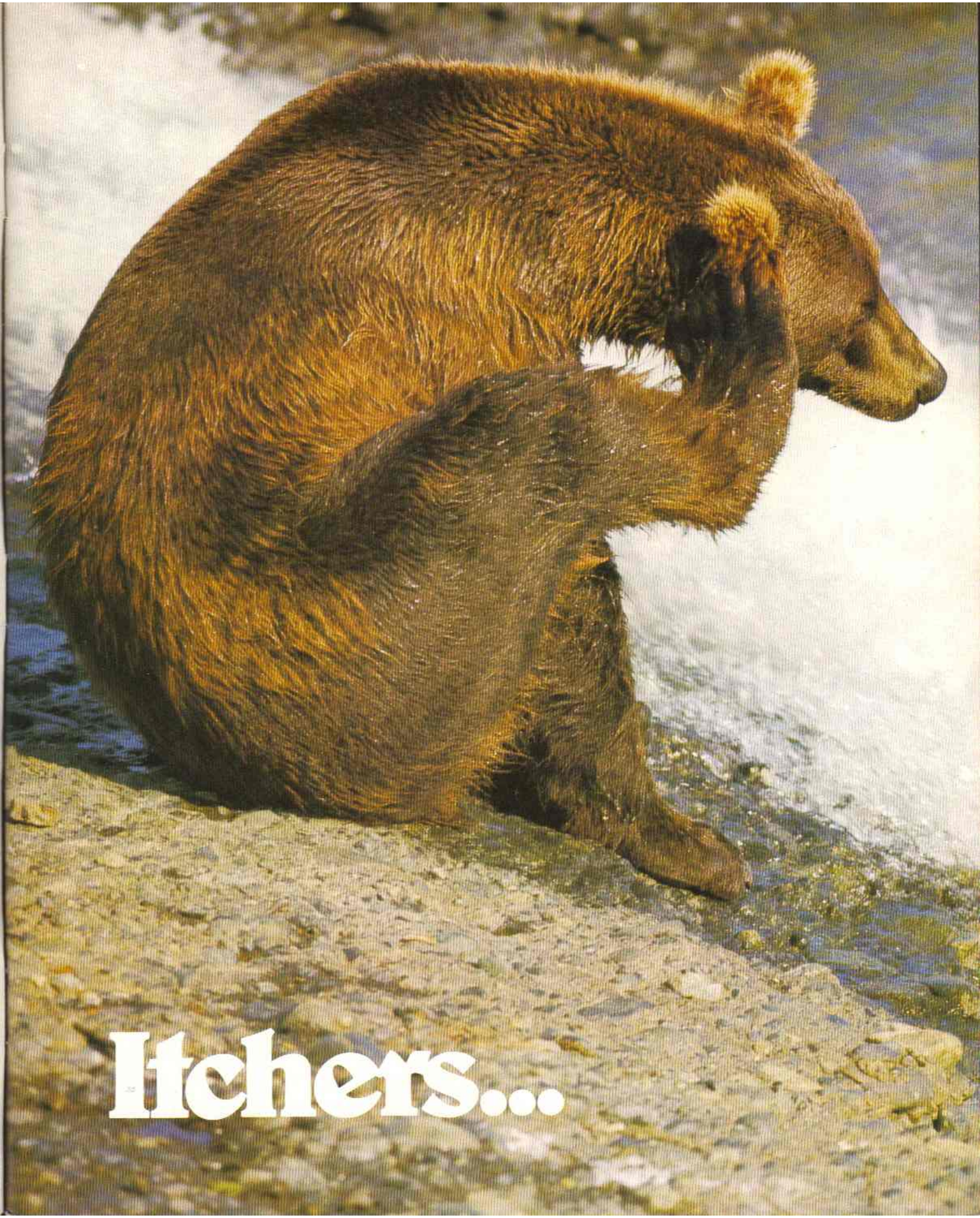
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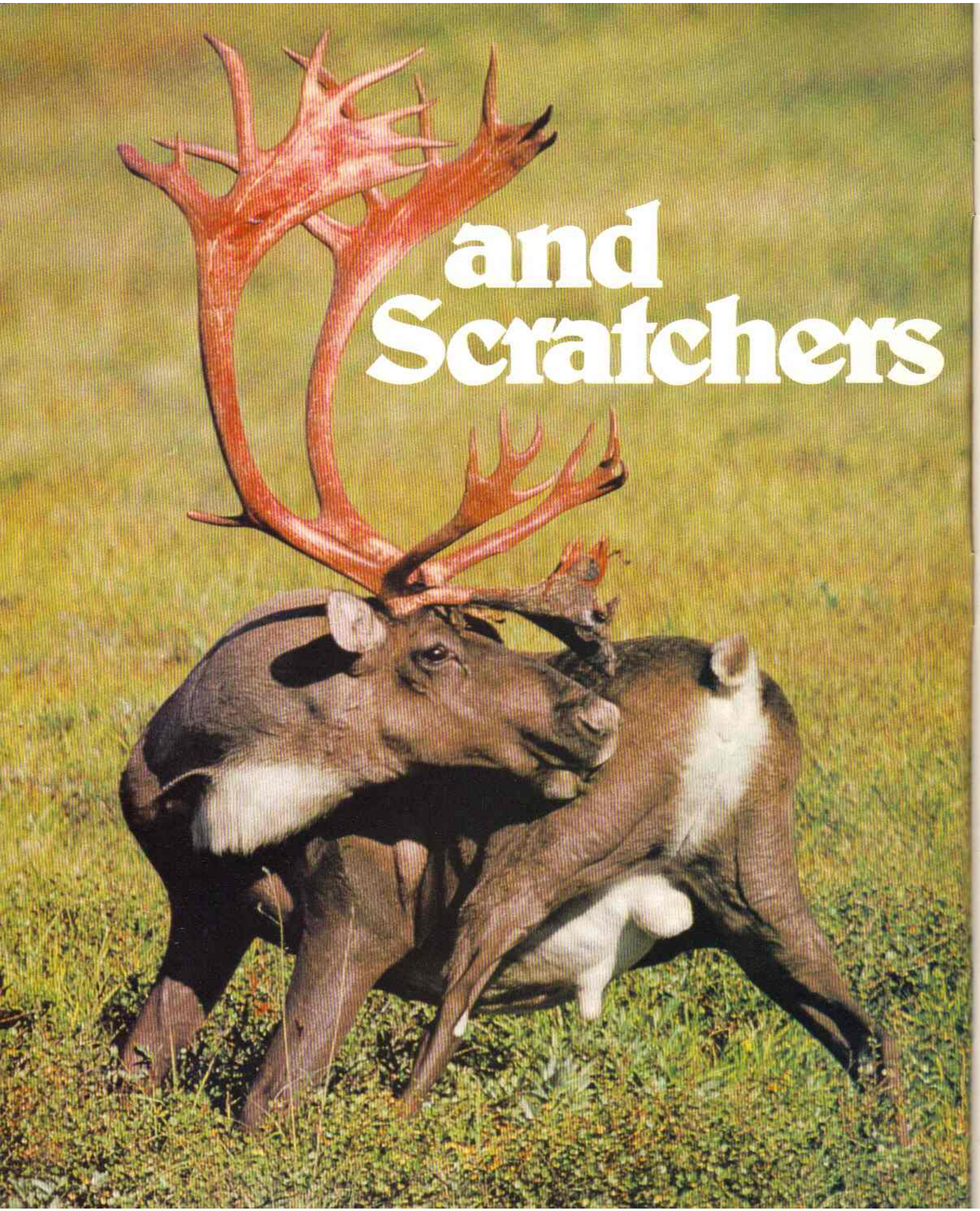

and
Scratchers

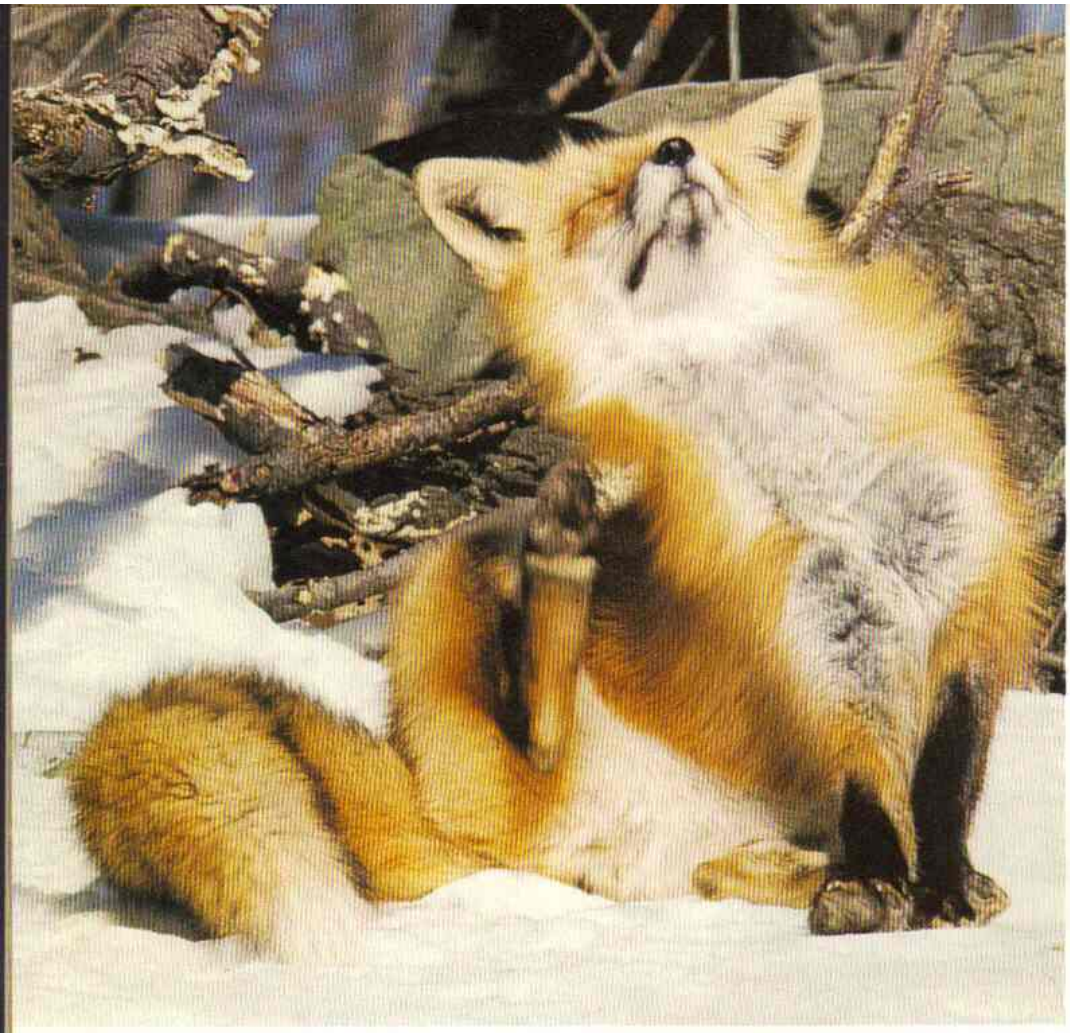
by Lee Stowell Cullen

MOSQUITOES bite! And mosquito bites itch! What do you do? You scratch! Animals itch and scratch too, and they have many different ways to scratch themselves. They use their tongues to lick itchy places, or a paw to reach behind an ear. Antlers make good scratchers for some animals. Nibbling with teeth helps too.

Some animals use the rough bark of trees for scratching. They rub against the trunk — back and forth, back and forth.

Please turn the page

Barren ground caribou; European brown bear; Sea lion



Photos by Leonard Lee Rue, III

SOMETIMES animals have a different way of "scratching." They take dust baths. They roll and twist in the dust to get rid of pests. (P-s-s-s-t, birds do it too!)

Not all scratching is to get rid of an itch. Many times it is a way for the animal to clean itself and spread body oil on its feathers or fur.

Scratching also helps get rid of ticks and fleas and other pests.

When animals go after an itch, I wonder if they feel the way I do: "Oh, it feels good to scratch!" *The End*

Red fox; Bison bull

by Gloria W. Lannom

TRAPPED IN AMBER

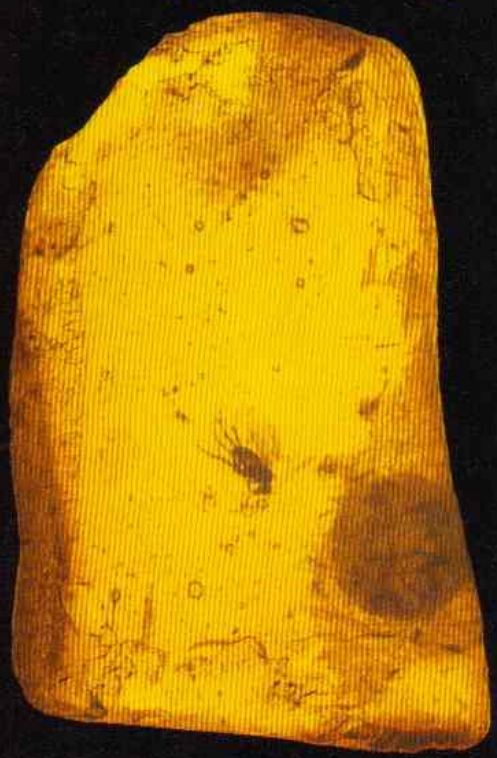
One hot, sunny prehistoric afternoon an ant took a walk along a pine tree branch. Along the way it stepped in a drop of sticky tree pitch or *resin (REZ-in)*. Have you ever touched the thick, sticky resin oozing from a pine tree or pine board? Then you know how hard it is to get it off your fingers.

The ant was unable to escape. It was trapped in the resin. More resin slowly covered its body. The drop of resin hardened in the air and sealed in the ant.

Many years later the pine tree died and fell. The lump of resin with the ant inside it was buried in the earth. But it did not decay with the tree. The resin turned into a fossil, called *amber*. Most of the ant's body dried out and left a mold in the amber. Now there was a fossil of the ant inside the amber fossil. In this form both would last for ages.

Millions of years later the piece of amber with the ant inside washed up on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Today amber is still found there, sometimes washed up by waves after a storm. Insect fossils in amber have also been found in other parts of the world, from Alaska to Indonesia.

Many fossils preserved in rock show only the outlines of plants or skeletons of animals that once were alive. All you can see are "printed" outlines of their bodies and scales or feathers. But amber has sealed plant and animal fossils in a hard, glasslike substance. They look almost the way they did when they were alive.



You can find insects such as ants, flies and wasps in amber. Leaves, feathers and seeds have been sealed in amber too. Even spiders and tiny lizards have been preserved in this way.

Of course not all amber holds animal or plant fossils. Some is clear and free of extras. Other pieces have air bubbles in them that make interesting designs.

A lot of amber was formed at least 40 million years ago. But scientists now think that some amber may have begun to form as long ago as 100 million years.

Stone Age people wore rough amber beads thousands of years ago. Later people traded amber for things they wanted.

Because of its beauty, amber has long been used to make jewelry and other pretty things. Amber rings, beads, tiny perfume bottles and small amber statues have been dug up near the Bay of Naples in Italy. They had

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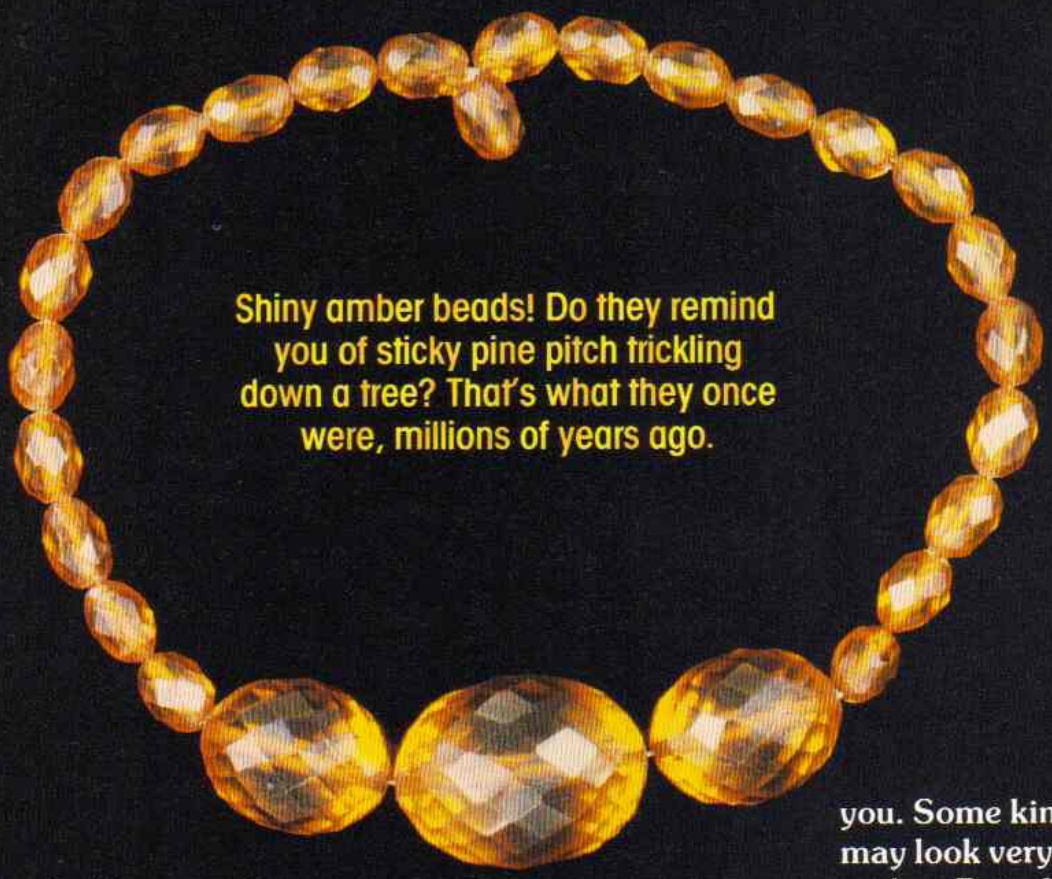


Shiny amber beads! Do they remind you of sticky pine pitch trickling down a tree? That's what they once were, millions of years ago.

Photos by Walter Dawn (7T); Runk/Schoenberger from Grant Heilman (7B); Ken Lucas

belonged to the Romans who lived in the ancient city of Pompeii (pom-PAY).

During the Middle Ages, people collected amber along the Baltic coast in northern Europe and took it all the way to Constantinople in Turkey. (Constantinople is now known as Istanbul.) There the amber was carved into jewelry.

People once believed that amber could cure or prevent some diseases. They also wore amber around their necks for good luck or to keep danger away. Today amber is still carved and polished. And it is still valued as a beautiful jewel.

The best amber for jewelry is *translucent (trans-LOO-sunt)*. Light seems to shine down into its depths. But cloudy amber is beautiful too, even though you can't see through it.

Amber comes in different colors. It can be light yellow or deep orange brown. Black and blue pieces of amber are rare. Some amber is *fluorescent (floor-ESS-sunt)* and shines under special light.

REAL OR FAKE?

The ancient Greeks called amber "elektron." (Our word *electricity* comes from that word.) They knew that when amber is rubbed, it makes *static electricity* — causing little pieces of dust or lint to cling to the amber. This same kind of electricity sometimes makes your clothes cling to you. Some kinds of plastic may look very much like amber. But when you rub them they won't make static electricity. This is one way of telling them apart.

Another way to tell whether amber is real or fake is to see whether it floats in a strong salt solution. Real amber will sink to the bottom. Fake amber will float.

Amber burns too. It smells like pine when it's on fire.

Some people like amber because it's pretty. But fossils in amber have helped us to learn about insects from millions of years ago. (Surprise — some of the ants and flies look just like the ones we see today!) Next time you see a wasp or some other insect caught in a drop of pine pitch, remember: You may be looking at a future fossil! *The End*

Ollie Otter's FUN PAGE

Drawing by Jack Lefkowitz

AT THE AVIARY

by Carsten Ahrens

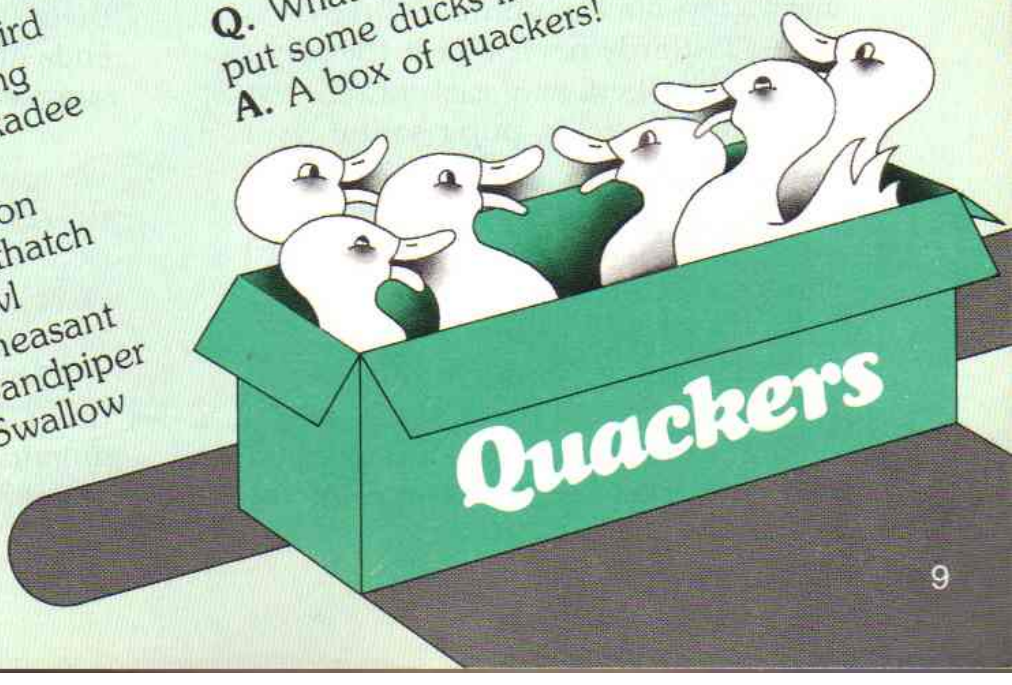
Many birds live in the aviary at the zoo. Someone mixed up the signs with the birds' names. Can you get them matched up correctly? (See the example — *Long-eared owl.*) **Answers on page 11.**

1 Barn	**A** Blackbird
2 Black-capped	**B** Bunting
3 Great Blue	**C** Chickadee
4 Indigo	**D** Gull
5 Laughing	**E** Heron
6 Long-eared	**F** Nuthatch
7 Red-breasted	**G** Owl
8 Red-winged	**H** Pheasant
9 Ring-necked	**I** Sandpiper
10 Spotted	**J** Swallow

First Pelican: Pretty good fish, eh? **Second Pelican:** They fill the bill.

Q. If a little bird could speak and found an orange in its nest, what do you think it would say?
A. "Look at the orange marmalade!"

Q. What would you have if you put some ducks in a box?
A. A box of quackers!



WHO-O-O KNOWS?

Dear Wise Old Owl:

I've heard mockingbirds sing many tunes and I wanted to know if they have a song of their own.

Christy Eckerman, San Antonio, TX

Yes, they do. Mockingbirds whistle a series of notes that are theirs alone. It's hard to describe them, so just listen carefully next time you hear a mockingbird. Mockers also have their own special call, which sounds like a harsh *chack*.

Mockingbirds aren't the only birds that you might hear copying other bird songs. Catbirds and brown thrashers do too. Here's how to tell the difference: When a mockingbird sings a phrase, it almost always repeats each phrase three or more times. Catbirds never repeat themselves. Brown thrashers sing each phrase twice, and have a sweeter, purer sound than mockingbirds.

Starlings sometimes copy the songs of other birds too. Only yesterday I heard a starling whisper *who-o-o-o knows!*

Do animals cry? If so, do they shed tears? Becky Schaub, Mt. Zion, IL

Many land animals produce a liquid like tears. This keeps their eyes moist and clean. But most animals do not cry the way you do.

When you are upset, the muscles around your eyes tighten up. This squeezes your tear glands, and tears fall from your eyes. Laughing hard also makes you cry.

Animals such as dogs do not have the same muscles in their faces that you do. They don't cry tears, but they do whimper when they are upset.

The great apes and a few monkeys sometimes shed tears when they are upset. I once saw a young orangutan pinch his finger on a swing. Was I surprised when he cried just like a human child!

How does a hammerhead shark use his hammer? Ellen Olson & Debbie Berlied

No one knows for sure, but they certainly don't use them to hammer nails. Some scientists think hammerheads use their heads for steering as they glide through the water. Other scientists think that having such wide heads helps the hammerheads search for food. Since their eyes and smelling organs are on the ends of the hammer, the sharks can sample a broad path as they swim.

We took a trip to the beach. As we walked along the wet sand at night I noticed that if I stomped on the ground little luminous specks appeared. What were they? Hazel Hammond, Age 14, Portland, OR

What you saw glowing were probably thousands of tiny plants. They are called *dinoflagellates (die-no-FLAJ-uh-lates)*. Usually dinoflagellates float in the sea.

When they are stirred up they give off a soft light. The ones you saw must have been left behind by the tide. (You can read more about plants and animals that make their own light in *Ranger Rick*, December 1977, page 25.)

I've got a question. Can animals get cavities? If they can't, why not?

Brett Wilson, Martinsville, IN

Animals can get cavities, but far less often than humans do. Their teeth just seem to fight the bacteria that would cause decay. Maybe that's partly because many animals gulp their food. The shape of their teeth doesn't hold food in their mouths long enough to cause problems. Animals also eat foods that are better for their teeth than the foods humans eat. Scientists have found that if rats eat a lot of sugar, they get cavities.

As perfect as I am, I'm quite proud to say that I've never had a cavity. Then again, we owls don't have teeth — just beautiful, pointy beaks. *W.O.O.*

Answers to *At the Aviary, page 9:* 1-J; 2-C; 3-E; 4-B; 5-D; 6-G; 7-F; 8-A; 9-H; 10-I.

Drawings by Cyndy Szekeres

What Kind of Camper Are You?

Imagine spending part of a summer at Wildlife Camp. It's high in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains and chock-full of forest friends and fun. There campers search for birds in a mountain meadow or wade in to study life in a pond. There's time to relax under an oak. Or to take a long hike to find beautiful wildflowers in the woods.

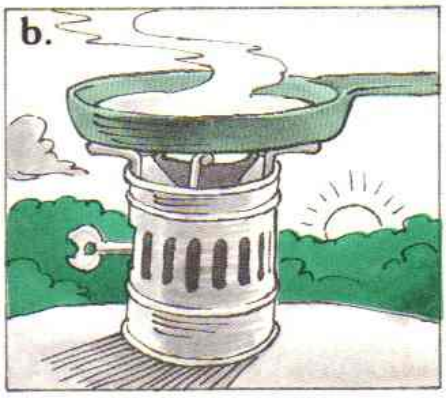
Campers fish, swim and play volleyball too.

The evenings are for spinning mountain folk tales and letting feet go square dancing.

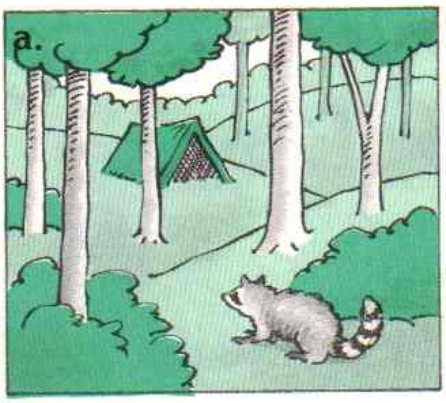
Wildlife Camp is an exciting place to learn outdoor skills: how to read maps and a compass; how to cook delicious wilderness meals. All these things help to make *good* campers. But knowing good *outdoor manners* makes *great* Wildlife Campers!

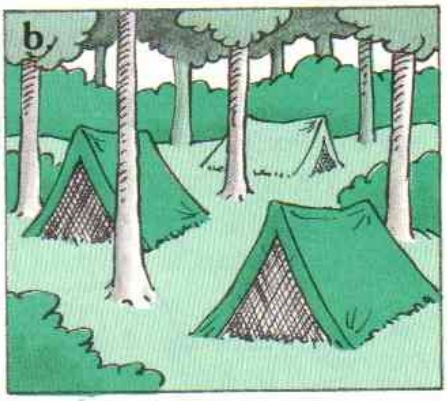
What manners should you pack in your knapsack? Play the following game and find out. Choose the camping manner in each set that is better than the other.

Drawings by Phil Nicholson

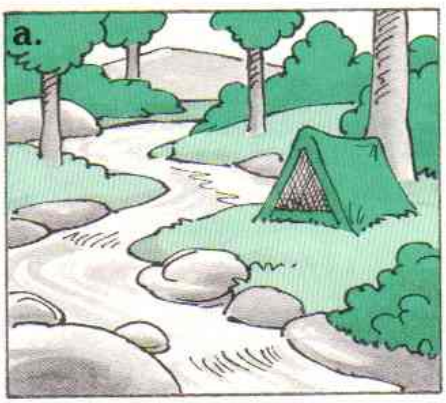


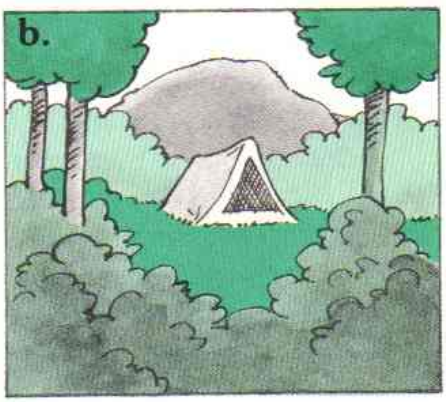
(1) a. Where wood is scarce, break off dead twigs and branches to make a camp fire. b. Use a small camp stove for cooking.



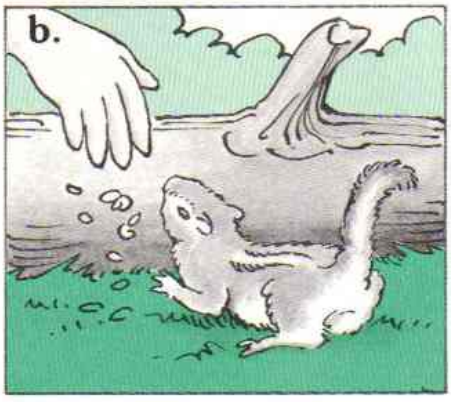


(2) a. Find a campsite away from other campers so you, and they, can enjoy the peace and quiet. b. Pick a campsite close to other campers so you can easily talk together.

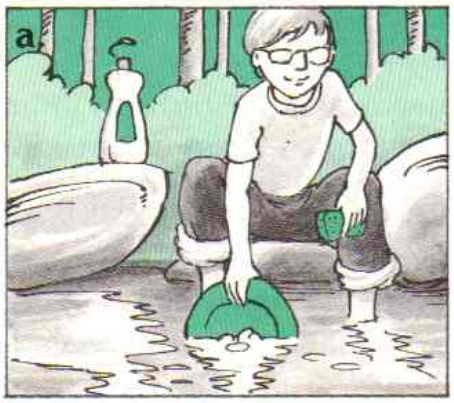


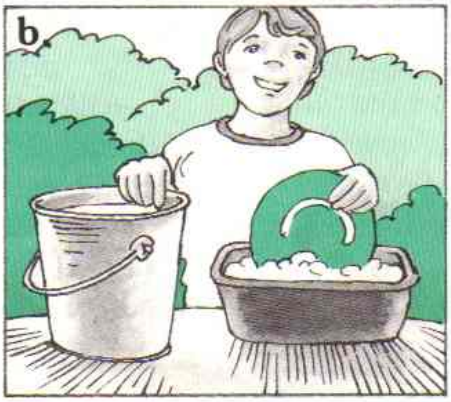


(3) a. Choose a campsite right on the edge of a lake or stream so you will be able to see any animals that come to drink. b. Camp away from the water. You won't disturb the animals and you won't pollute the water.

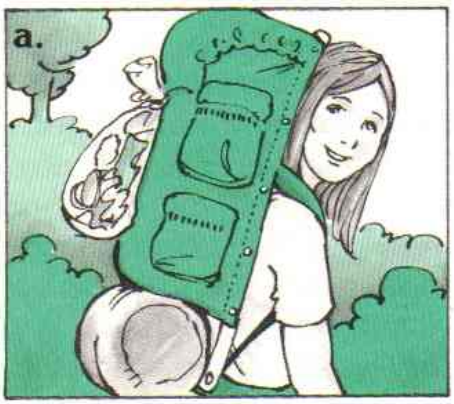


(4) a. Never feed *any* wild animals. b. Put out scraps of food for the cute little chipmunks and funny raccoons.





(5) a. Wash all dishes and messy pans, and take a bath yourself, in a lake or stream. b. Do all your dishes and bathing with water you've carried some distance from a lake or stream.



(6) a. Take home, or completely burn, all leftover food, litter or trash that you find or create. b. Bury left-over food, trash and litter. Then animals can dig them up for dinner or when their regular food supplies run short.

Hiking Manners:

(7) a. Always wear hiking boots with heavy rubber cleats so you won't slip on the trail. **b.** Unless you hike in rugged, rocky country, try not to wear boots with rubber cleats. They may damage the soil and plants.

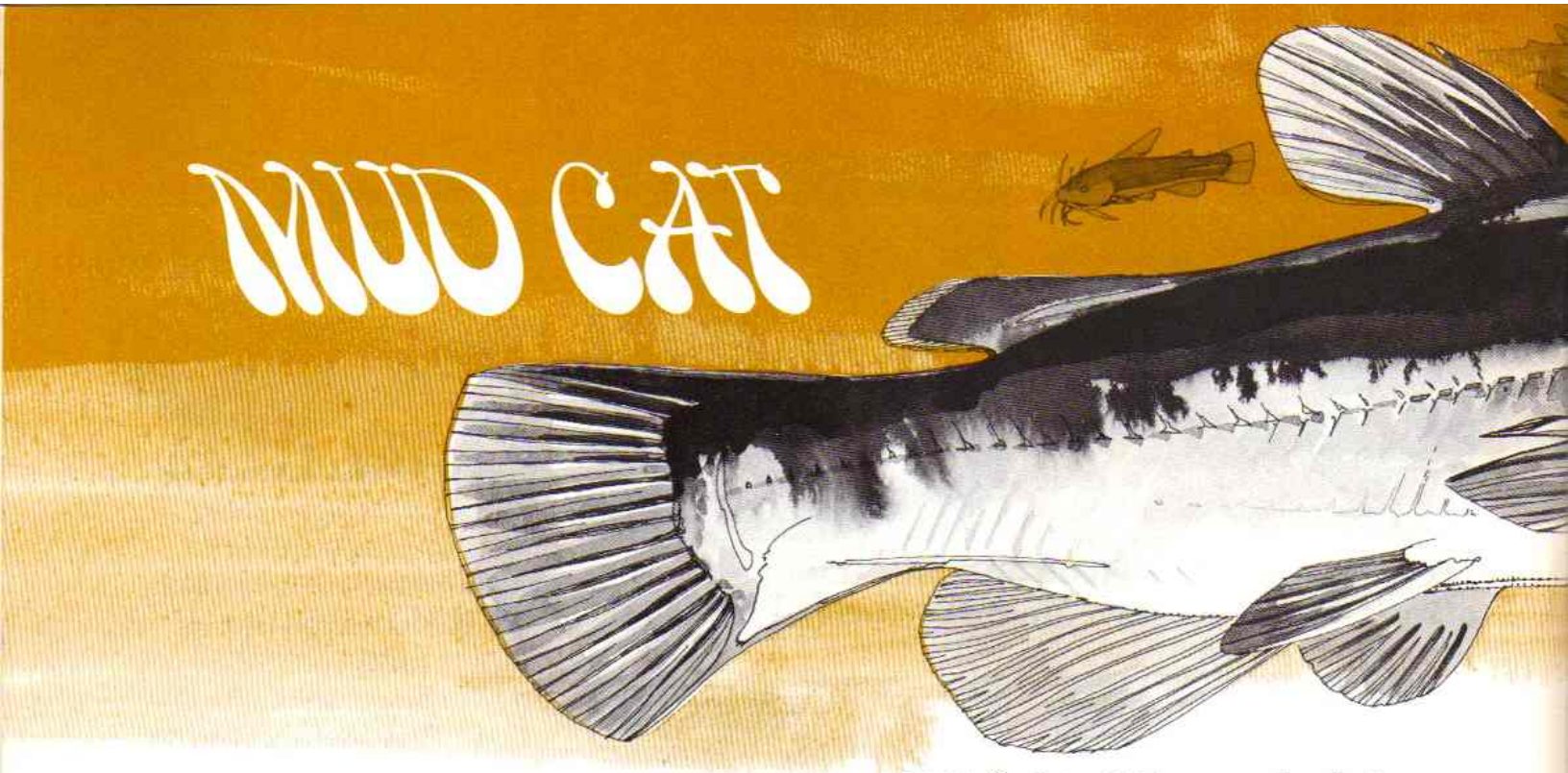
(8) a. Travel the trails in one large group. If you split up into smaller groups, you could get lost. **b.** Hike in pairs or small groups. If you follow the trail or use a compass, you shouldn't get lost. You will probably see more wildlife and enjoy the scenery more.

(9) a. Walk through muddy places so you don't widen the trail. **b.** Walk around muddy parts of a trail so you can keep your hiking boots clean.

(10) a. When hiking in an area that has no trails, be sure to mark trees and rocks so you can find your way back. **b.** Do not mark a trail or leave any other signs you were there. Learn how to use a compass instead.

Check your score and find out more about an exciting summer adventure on page 40a.

MUD CAT



by Fred Johnson

AFTER a summer shower the sunshine sparkles on the lake. Fish dash here and there. They are chasing creatures that the rain has washed into the water. Yellow and blue sunfish shimmer and vanish. Minnows streak by, silver and green. Bass leap out of the water to snatch insects. They flash in the sunlight for a moment, then disappear. It is a pretty sight.

Not all fish are so active, though. Down below, close to the mud, lurks a long lump of a fish — a brown bullhead catfish named Mud Cat. She won't really get busy until dark. Then she will cruise along the bottom and find plenty to eat.

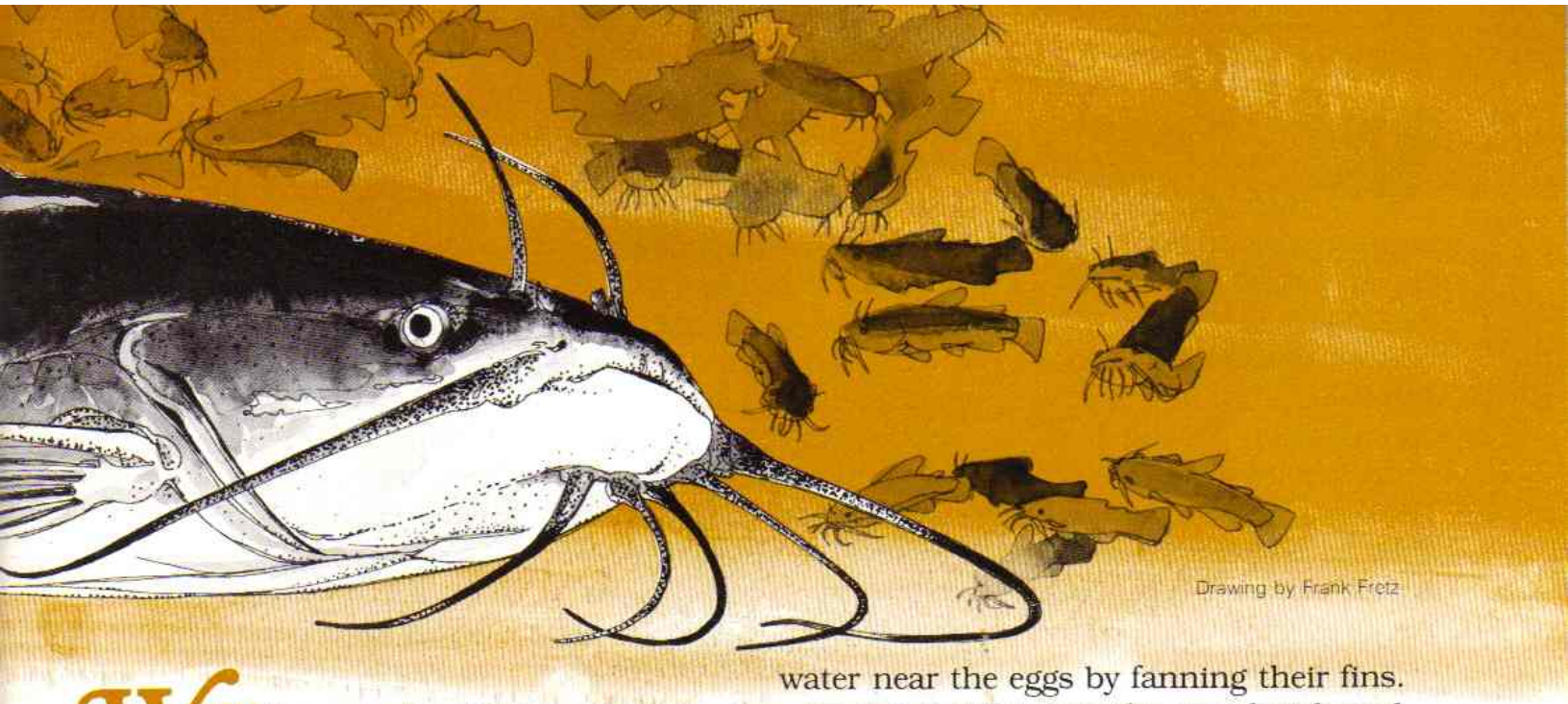
Even though she does have nice blue-black eyes, Mud Cat certainly isn't very pretty. Let other fish have bright colors and fancy scales. She has a smooth, brown, scaleless skin that is covered with taste buds from head to tail. The skin works together with her eyes, ears, nostrils and "whiskers." Every inch of her picks up the sights, sounds, odors or tastes of her murky, watery world.

Eight fleshy whiskers, or *barbels*, dangle from her fat lips like a wavy beard. These are covered with taste buds that are always checking the mud and water. Mud Cat is looking for interesting flavors as she patrols the lake bottom. Her tasters tell her the difference between rotted logs, water insects, snails and rusty cans.

When a good flavor turns up, Mud Cat goes right to it. She finds it quickly and has a snack. Just about anything interests her as long as she can eat it — especially if it has a strong smell.

That's a good thing to know if you go fishing for Mud Cat. A feathered fishing fly does not interest her. You'll have better luck with a bit of smelly cheese. And if you want her instant attention, offer her fat worms or a piece of liver. She gobbles that bait down at once!

All fish have a line along each side. These lines are "sensing tubes" called *lateral lines*. In some fish they are very keen at picking up sounds in the water. Since Mud Cat lives mostly by taste and smell, her tubes do not need to be so sensitive. But her ears, which are hidden beneath her skin, are very keen.



Drawing by Frank Fretz

WITH her ears Mud Cat can tell when a young frog is swimming nearby. Or she can notice beetles chewing stems of water plants. She also can hear the faint sound of caddisworms busy stacking small pebbles. That's handy for a fish who's always looking for food! She can even sense you up there on the bank. As you walk along she hears your footsteps.

Muddy or churned-up water doesn't bother Mud Cat at all. She snoops along, "licking" with her barbels. When a good taste turns up in the mud she "snow plows" for it with her snout. Behind her nostrils are two sacs with organs of smell. The mud and water flow into her nostrils, bringing her the odors of worms, rotted flesh and other things of great interest. She misses nothing that she can eat.

In the spring Mud Cat finds a mate who has scooped out a shallow, saucer-shaped nest near the shore of the lake or river. If the nest is in an old auto tire or a can or under a board, that's even better. She lays a mass of eggs in the nest. Her mate fertilizes the eggs by spraying them with *milt* from his body. Then the father or both parents settle down nearby to keep watch. Every once in a while they stir the water near the eggs by fanning their fins.

In about eight days the eggs hatch and the young (called *fry*) begin to wiggle about. Mud Cat and her mate quickly chase away any predators. If the fry get too bold and swim away from the nest, one of the parents will round them up and shoo them back where they are safe. The fry stay together in a wiggly black ball. When they are old enough to leave the nest their parents take the whole swarm on exploring trips.

Before long the parents seem to lose interest in protecting their young. In fact they might start to eat them. The fry seem to sense they're in danger, and most of them scoot away into deeper water. There they begin lives of their own.

Mud Cat, the brown bullhead, is only one of about 25 kinds of catfish in North America. She is a very common kind.

MUD CAT is a prize for anybody who likes to fish. She can put up a battle, and she is tasty.

So next time you go fishing, don't forget to take along earthworms, liver or some smelly cheese. Go in the evening and plan to stay past dark. Mud Cat will be down there, prowling about at the bottom of the river or lake. You just might catch her!

The End

by Shirley Lee

Animal Keepers:

WHAT is it like to work at a zoo? Is it fun to look after the hippos and snakes, or maybe the seals?

Yes, working with 300 animals *is* fun, but that doesn't mean playing all day with a zooful of pets.

Animal keepers work hard. They have to keep their animals clean and well fed. They shovel manure. They hose down and disinfect the animals' living areas. They rake yards, lift hay and carry big trays full of food. They carefully watch over their animals and report any injury or strange behavior to the *curators* (scientists in charge).

Animal keepers are kind to their animals, but they don't make pets of them. They don't teach them tricks. In fact, elephants are usually the only zoo animals that are trained at all. And they're merely taught to go where their keeper tells them to. The rest of the animals are controlled rather than trained. Good zoos try to let all of their animals live as closely as possible to the way they would live in the wild.

How does a person get to be an animal keeper? It is different at different zoos. Most zoos hire people who have already worked with animals. Some zoos might give a job to someone who had worked on a farm or in a stable or pet shop. They especially look for people who once worked on wildlife preserves or who have helped veterinarians care for sick animals.

But some people who have had little experience find jobs as animal keepers too. Maybe they just get along well with animals and show that they have a way with them. Zoos like such people.

At the Los Angeles Zoo men and women who want to be animal keepers are asked to take tests. One is a written test and another shows what they can do physically. Animal keepers have to be able to move quickly. And they have to be strong enough to lift, push and do lots of outdoor work. Part of the test is pushing a loaded wheelbarrow uphill.

Most zoos have training programs. New animal keepers work all over the zoo for a while. They help the regular keepers. The new keepers get to know all kinds of creatures and what sort of care each one needs. Then they are given one group or maybe a "string" of several kinds of animals to care for. Sometimes they work "on demand." That is, they work in whatever part of the zoo they're needed. Some keepers study animal behavior so they will know more about the habits of the animals they work with.

What makes a good animal keeper? Liking animals, of course, is important. Not minding the dirty work helps. You also need to be patient.

"Many times," says an

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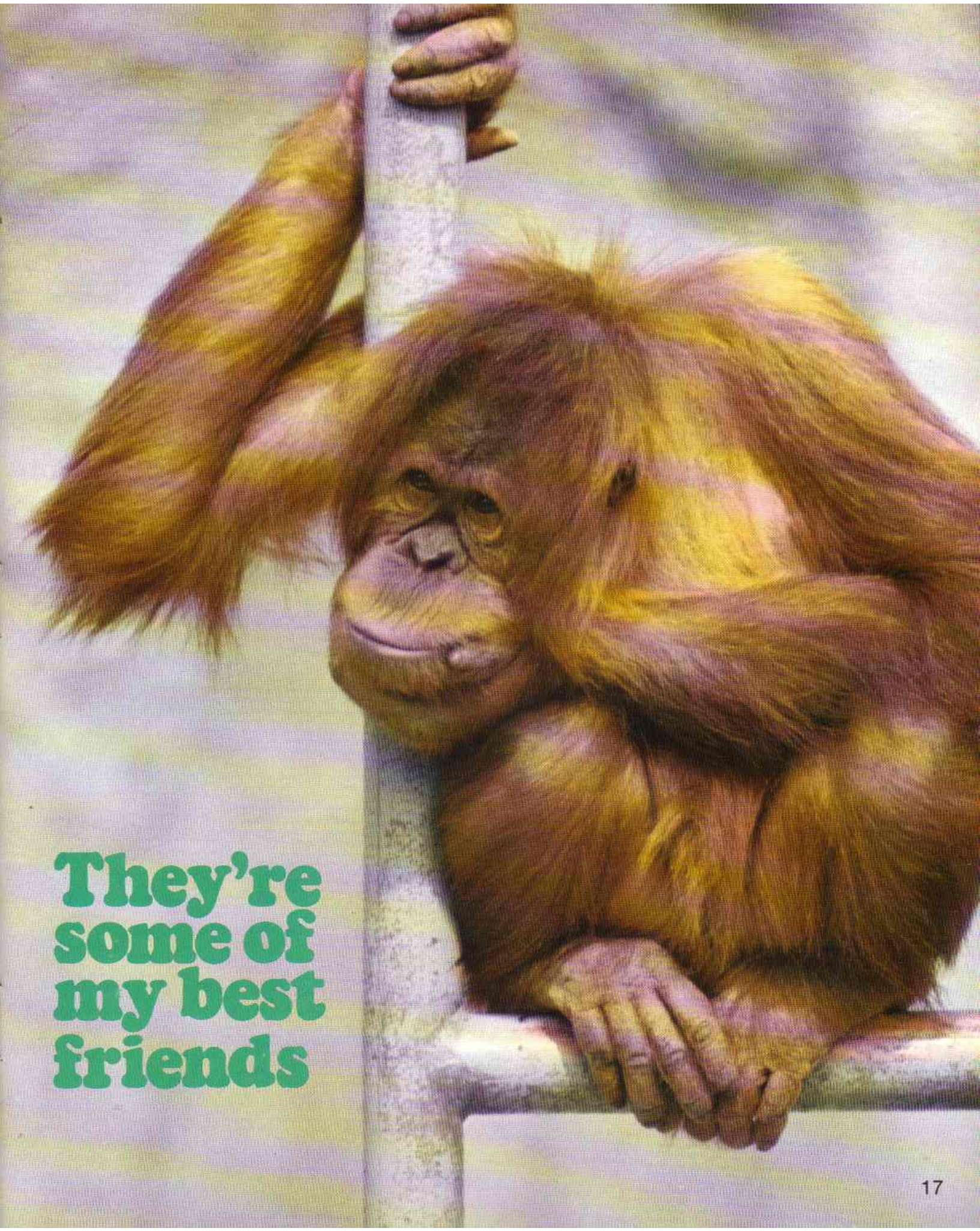
Photo by Tom Myers



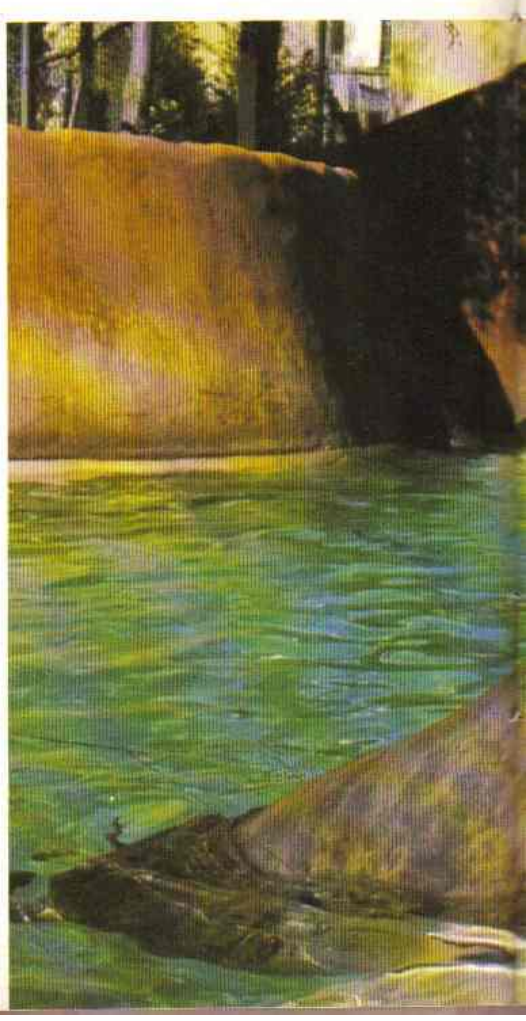
They're some of my best friends

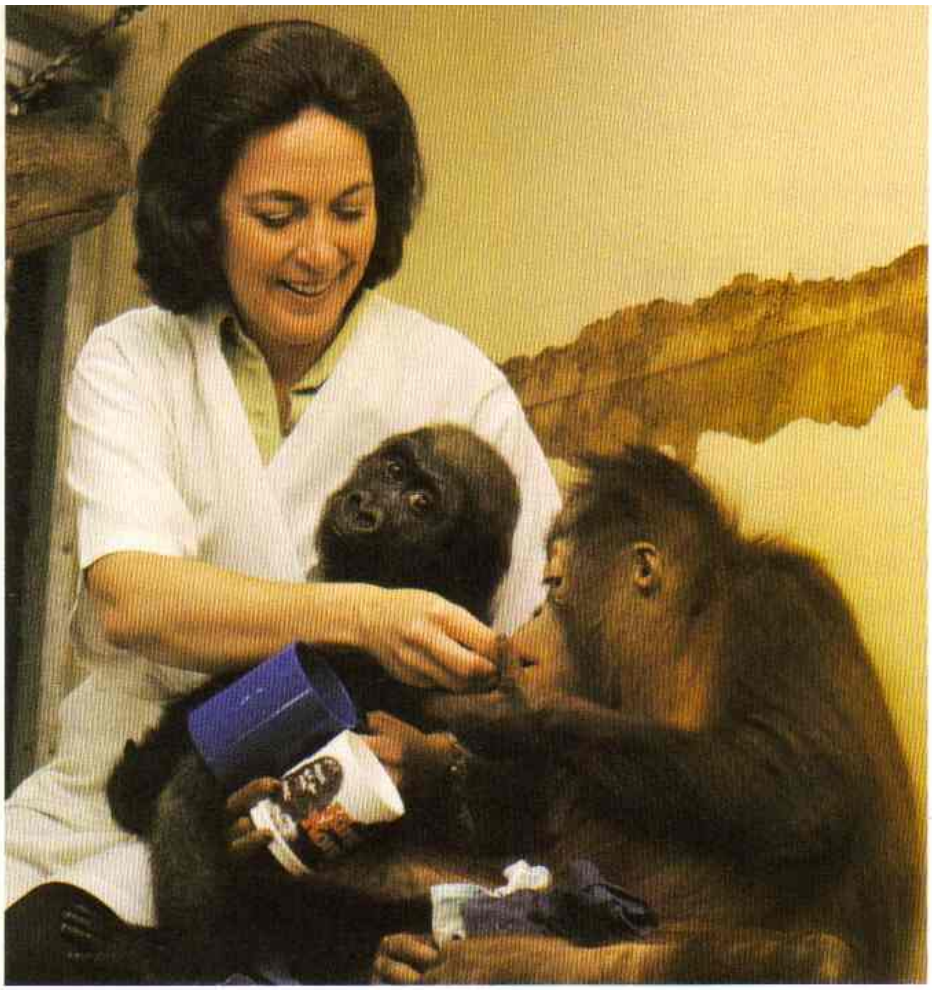
Giving an animal a scratch, a cuddle or a tasty fish is only a small part of a zoo keeper's job. They do lots of hard work, too.

animal keeper at the Los Angeles Zoo, "you have to move animals around. You can't pick up a tiger and put it someplace else, and you can't give a poky rhino a push. You have to coax animals, perhaps by offering them a special food treat. And sometimes you just have to wait until the animal is ready to move."

Being able to keep calm in emergencies also makes a good animal keeper. When animals fight among themselves, their keepers must get them apart. They never use weapons, though they might use a broom or a garbage can lid to protect themselves. Sometimes a brisk stream of water from a hose is the only thing that will stop animals from fighting. The keepers have to use good sense.

Many keepers think that monkeys and apes are the hardest creatures to handle. These clever animals sometimes play tricks on their keepers. More than one chimpanzee has grabbed a waterhose and given its keeper a soaking.



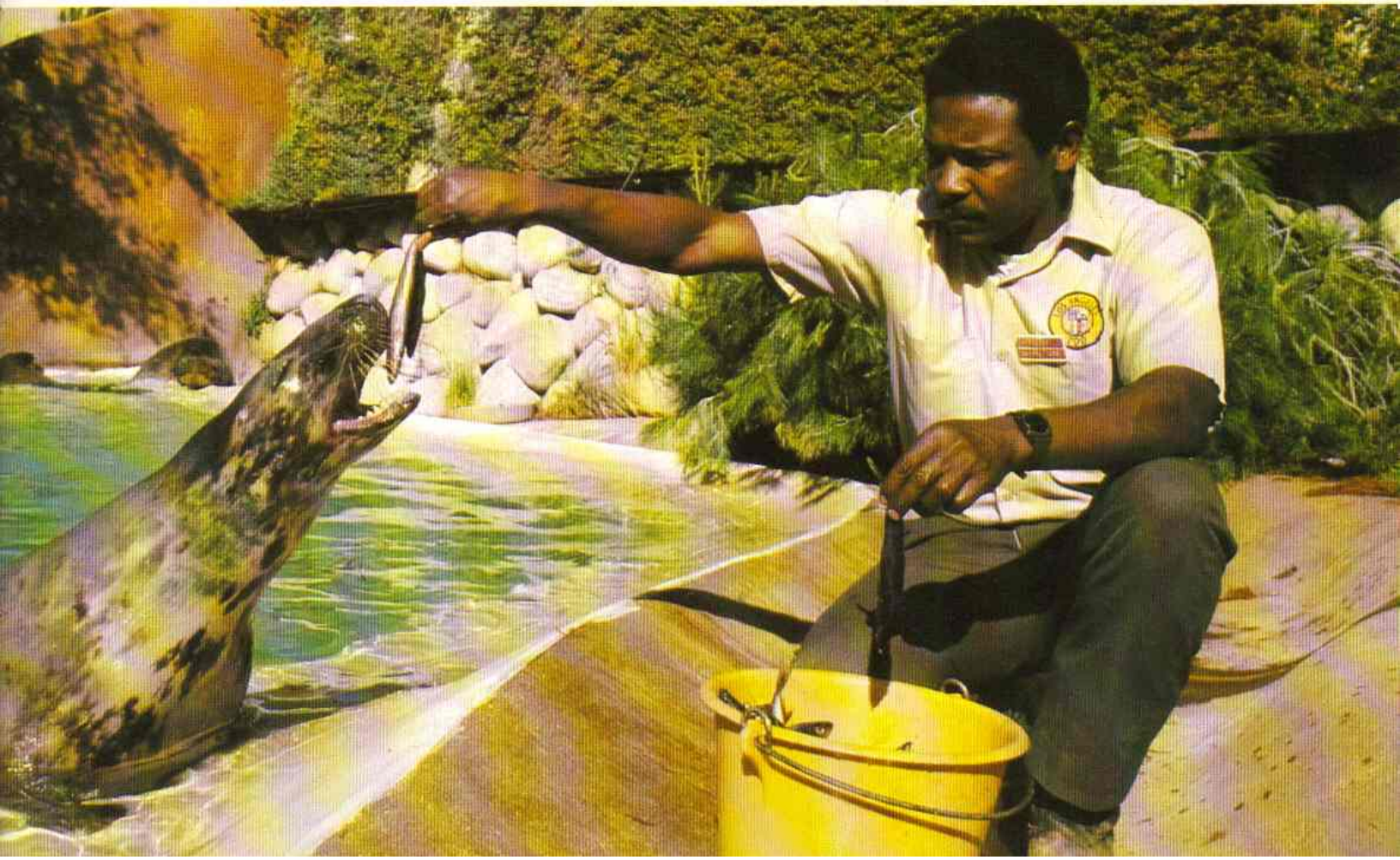


Photos by Don Sanders; L. A. Zoo (Sy Oskeroff) below

Many animals get used to their keepers and seem to like having them around. And they usually like all the meals their keepers supply.

Animal keepers are important people. What would zoos do without them? And without zoos where would people be able to see wild animals close up and learn from them? And how would the zoos be able to help some of the world's endangered animals?

It's nice to know that a number of men and women would rather take care of animals than do anything else in the world. *The End*



Adventure #125 The Big Poison Hunt

Ranger Rick and his friends

by Sara Bulette

"I just know something bad has happened to Ranger Rick!" said Mollie Muskrat. "He's late for our meeting here at Shady Pond."

"Well, he sure hasn't been his usual peppy self lately," said Zelda Possum.

"I'll go down to his tree house and look for him," said Ollie Otter.

"Let me!" cried Sammy Squirrel as he took off through the trees. "I can get there faster."

Rick's den looked empty when Sammy got there. He was wondering where to look next when he heard a low moan. It was Rick, curled up in a pile of leaves. Sammy could hardly see him.

"I feel so sick," said Rick weakly, "I don't think I can climb out of my den."

"I'll get help," said Sammy. He raced back to Shady Pond. "Zelda, Ollie!" yelled Sammy as he dashed up to the other animals. "Rick is sick and needs your help! Take your first aid kit." Zelda and Ollie left right away.

After Zelda and Ollie left, Sammy told the other animals that Rick didn't seem to have any wounds or broken bones. Maybe something he had eaten or drunk had made him sick.

Sure enough. When Ollie and Zelda returned to Shady Pond, Zelda explained that something in the water must be making Rick sick. "He's slowly being poisoned," she said sadly.

"Poisoned!" shrieked the other animals.

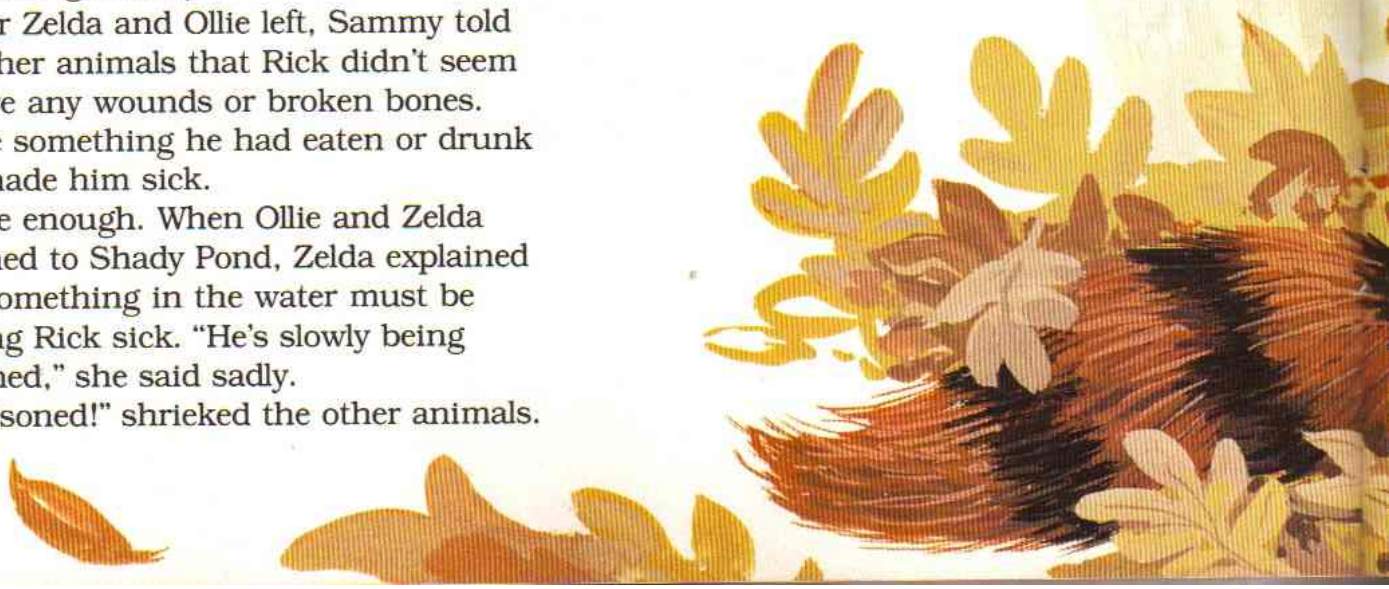
"But how come none of us is sick? We *all* drink from Clear Creek," said Sammy.

"The poison may be slowly building up in some kind of food that Rick catches in the creek," answered Zelda. "Who knows? All I'm saying is that we've got to find out where the poison is coming from."

"Let's start looking!" cried Ollie. He made straight for the place where Clear Creek passed by Rick's den.

Peering and sniffing, Ollie scrambled past the tiny pools and waterfalls where Rick often hunted crayfish. At last he reached the place where the woods ended and Bigfarm Meadow began.

This was the beginning of Clear Creek. Here the stream was fed by springs in the meadow. The stream was narrow and overgrown with low bushes. Ollie had to crawl on his belly along the muddy streambed. But what kind of mud was this? Black smelly goo!



Ollie sniffed his paw. Oil! He looked around. Plastic jugs leaking dirty oil were scattered all about. Ollie had a job to do — find out whether there were more jugs around. He had to work fast!

Right that minute, not far away, Mollie Muskrat was doing *her* job. She was questioning her cousin, Martha, who lived nearby.

Martha was saying, "Maybe the poison comes from those smelly jugs two big boys have been dumping in the bushes along Clear Creek. I first saw them one night last week. They drove down the farm road with their car lights out. I hoped they might be dumping something good to eat. But one sniff told me it was nothing *I* wanted to eat!"

Mollie's heart was beating fast. "Thanks, cousin! I've got to report this at once."

It was almost dark when Mollie reached Shady Pond. All the animals were crowded around Ollie. His fur was covered with black, smelly goo.

Please turn the page

"He has the evidence all over him," snickered Sammy Squirrel. "Boy, Ollie, you *stink*."

"How many jugs did you see along Clear Creek?" asked Mollie.

"More than I could count," said Ollie. "*Hey!* How did you know about the jugs? You just got here!"

Mollie told them what her cousin had seen.

"Now we know who, what and where," said Sammy, "but *how* can we stop what's happening?"

"Farmer Phillips will stop it!" cried Mollie. "As soon as he starts mowing around Clear Creek, he'll see those jugs. When he finds out they're leaking dirty oil, he'll take care of them!"

"They're hidden under the bushes," said Ollie. "He won't see them."

"We can *show* him," said Mollie. "We can push and pull a few of those jugs out in the open. Then we can make a trail leading down to the bushes."

And that is just what the animals did. When they had finished, they hid at the edge of the meadow.

Early next morning Farmer Phillips drove by on his tractor. He stopped and looked at the jugs. He got off the tractor and picked up one, then another. Soon he had followed the line of jugs all the way down to Clear Creek. He looked around, shook his head and hurried back to his tractor. Then he drove away.

"I wonder what he's going to do?" asked Ollie.

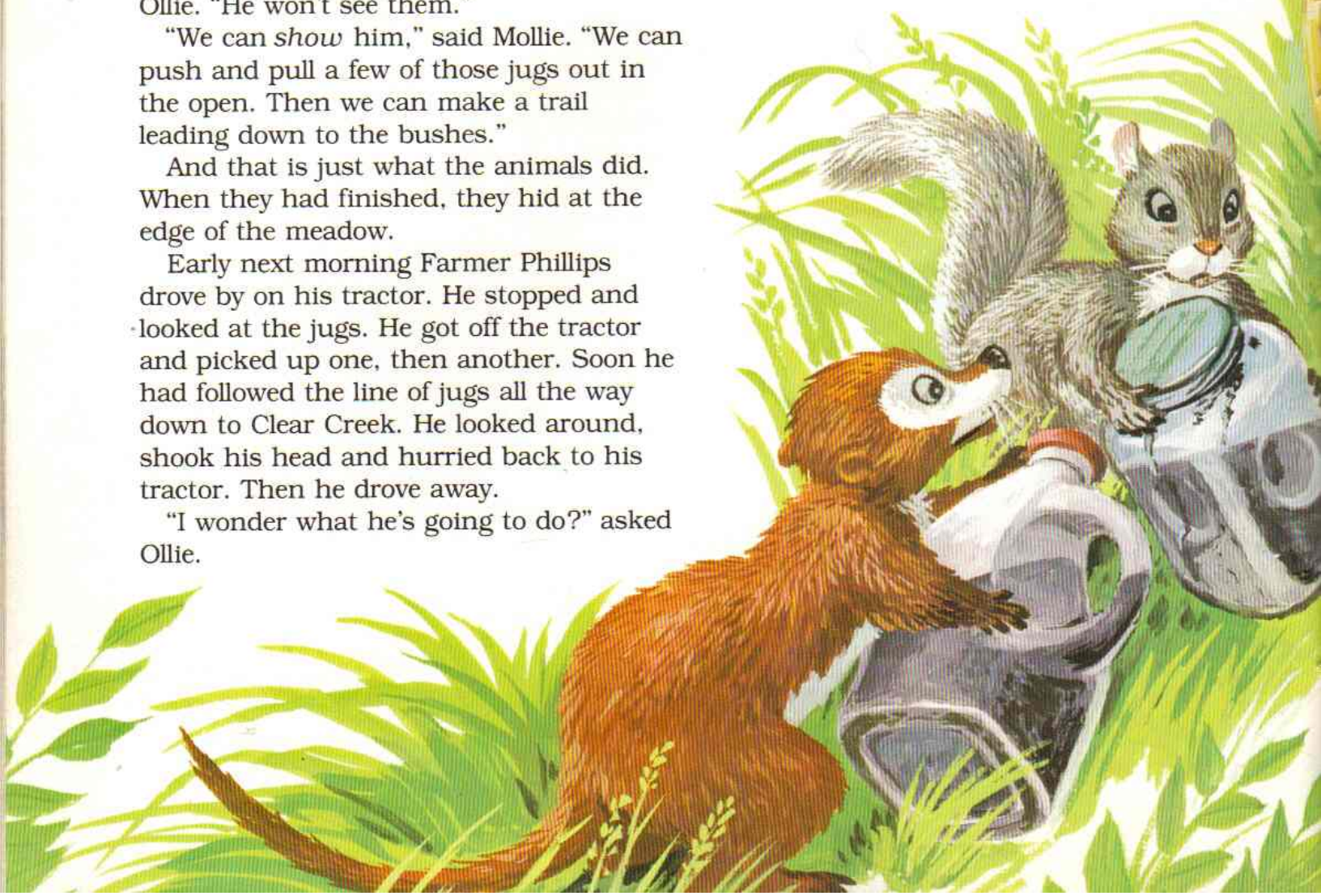
"Let's wait and see," said Zelda.

About an hour later, Farmer Phillips was back, this time with his pickup truck. To the animals' surprise, he had six kids with him. They hurried about picking up jugs and putting them on the truck.

"Those are neighborhood kids Farmer Phillips allows to fish in the creek," whispered Martha. "Look! The two boys who dumped the oil jugs are helping Farmer Phillips!"

"That's strange," exclaimed Mollie, "they chased two dogs away from my hut this winter! They like wildlife. I'm sure they didn't know what harm the oil could do."

Several days later, when Rick was feeling more like himself, he and his friends went to talk with Ranger Tom.



Drawings by Lorin Thompson

"Farmer Phillips told me what has been happening," said Tom. "People living along Ridge Road had been paying the two boys to haul away the dirty oil. It was motor oil that the people had drained from their cars. You see, no one had bothered to ask where the boys were taking the oil. The people just wanted to get rid of it. So I visited all of them and told them that the oil was poisoning Clear Creek. Now everybody knows the damage that was done."

"But where will people take their dirty oil now?" asked Zelda.

"Luckily we have a new plan in this area," said Tom. "People can take their dirty oil to certain gas stations. The stations hold it in special tanks. Then they sell it to people who take it away and clean it. Once it's cleaned, the oil can be used again. Oil doesn't wear out. It just gets dirty."

"That sounds like a great plan!" exclaimed Rick. "Thanks to all of you animals and Ranger Tom, we have cause for a celebration. Especially *me!*"

"Well, at least we know Clear Creek will be all right again," said Sammy, "but what about other places all over the country?"

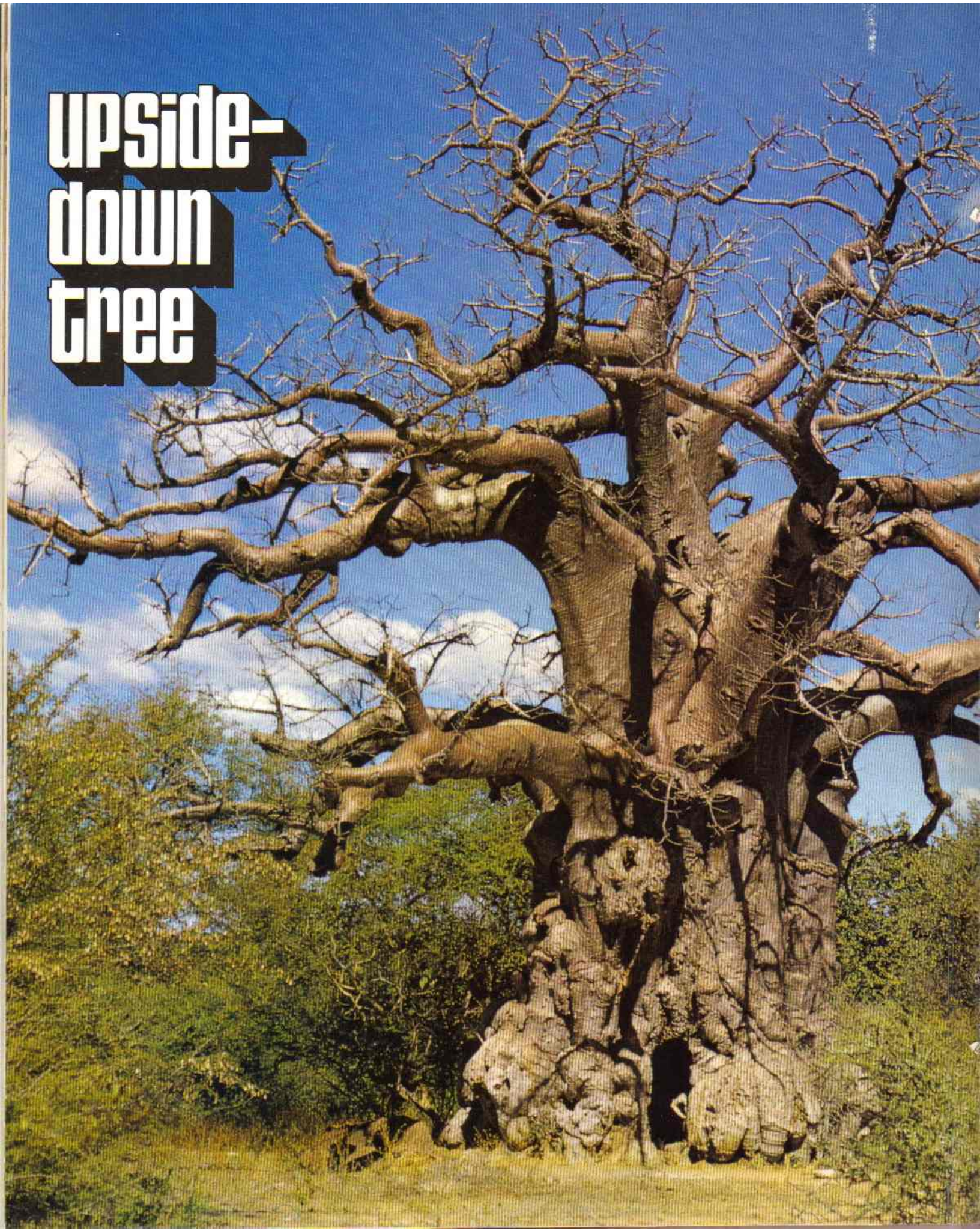
"That is a problem," said Tom. "People everywhere are putting used motor oil in land fills, backyards and even toilets. It causes more oil pollution in water than anything else! Every year millions of gallons of dirty oil get into sewers, soil and water, harming people and wildlife."

"Looks as if a lot more places need to make it easy for people to get rid of their dirty oil safely," said Rick. "Then we need laws that will make oil-dumpers pay stiff fines or even go to jail!" said Rick.

"Cheer up, Rick," said Ollie. "Your Rangers and their parents will read about our big poison hunt. Then they'll do something to stop this awful oil leak."

"I hope so," said Rick, with a grin. "This is one pollution problem that has *really* made me sick!" *The End*

upside-down tree



Photos by Edward S. Ross; M. P. Kahl/Bruce Coleman, Inc.

by Jo Forman

An upside-down tree? No — trees don't grow that way. But a *baobab (BAY-uh-bab)* tree looks as if it is doing just that — growing upside down. The huge trunk divides into many short, twisted branches high above the ground.

Much of the year the branches are bare and look more like roots than tree limbs. Some baobabs look like big fat bottles with branches sticking out of the top. Most baobabs stand alone, their weird shapes towering over the bushes and grasses of the African plains.

There is an old African legend about the baobab, explaining why it appears to be upside down. Many, many years ago the baobab tree looked just like any other tree. It was tall with large, strong branches covered with many beautiful green leaves and sweet white blossoms. The tree felt very important because it was one of the largest trees in the world.

Baobabs look as if they have roots where their branches should be. But when it rains they sprout thousands of green leaves!

In fact, the baobab felt much too important to remain in just one place all the time. So it wandered from place to place, proudly showing off for all to see.

The god who created trees was angry with the baobab for moving. He picked up the tree and put it back where he had planted it. Then he told the baobab to stay there. But the tree could not resist moving around and showing off.

The god got angrier because the tree did not obey him. Finally he became so furious that he grabbed the baobab and shoved it into the earth upside down. Its twisted bare roots stuck up into the sky, and its beautiful branches were buried forever. No one would ever again think that the baobab was a beautiful tree, so the legend goes.

Of course the baobab's roots are *really* planted firmly in the ground. During the rainy season the branches bear big green leaves. But where the baobab grows, there is a long dry season; then the leaves drop off.

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Elephants like to chew the baobab's spongy wood. Sometimes they knock down whole trees.

The baobab has a special way to stay alive during the dry season: It stores water in its fat trunk. The wood of the baobab is soft and can be wrung out like a wet rag.

The tree has white flowers that open only at night. Bats and other small animals like to visit them to eat the nectar and pollen. Their nighttime visits may have started the legend that the tree is haunted by strange spirits.

The fruit of the baobab is yellow and egg-shaped. It is covered with fuzzy hair and dangles on the end of a long, ropelike stem. The fruit is sometimes called "monkey bread" because monkeys and baboons seem to enjoy the mealy pulp found inside.

People also eat the seeds and the pleasant-tasting pulp. The pulp makes a drink that is delicious on a hot day.

The smooth, gray bark of the baobab tree is strong. It can be made into rope, cloth and paper. Even strings for musical instruments can be made from it.

The baobab is often called the tree of life. It is home for many kinds of birds, insects and small mammals. Birds peck holes in the soft trunk so they can build their nests

inside. Small animals can easily dig and chew into the soft wood to make their own "apartments."

Honeybees like to build hives in these trees. Even people have lived inside the trunks of baobab trees! They hollow out the tree and move right in. The tree survives and the person has a new home.

Not many baobabs are left today. Farming is using up much of the land where the baobabs once grew. People are cutting them down for firewood.

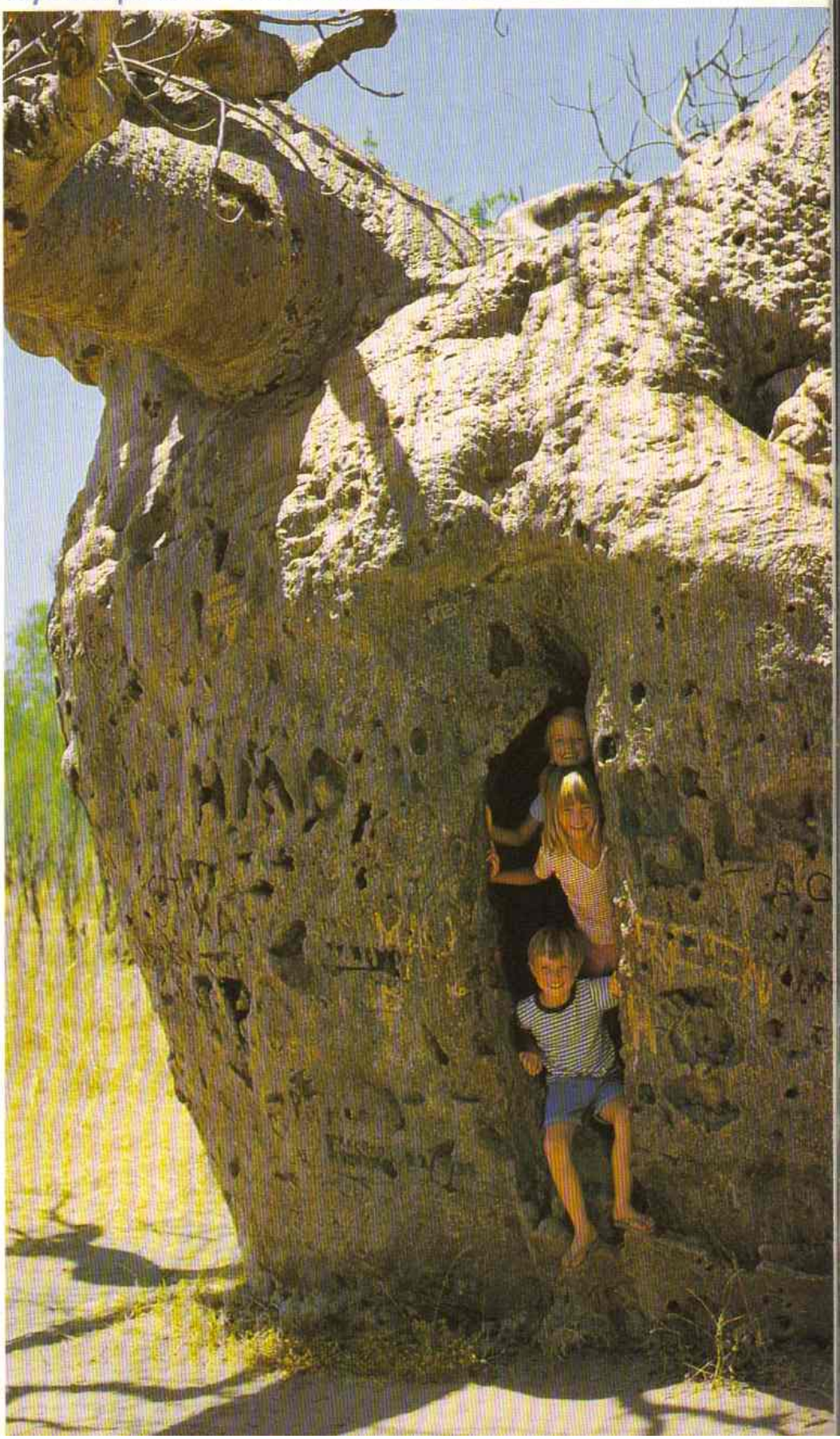
On the animal preserves it is hard to protect the baobabs from animals that can destroy the trees. Elephants like to strip off the bark and chew the soft spongy wood. They also stab the trees with their tusks. Elephants may even knock over and kill a baobab.

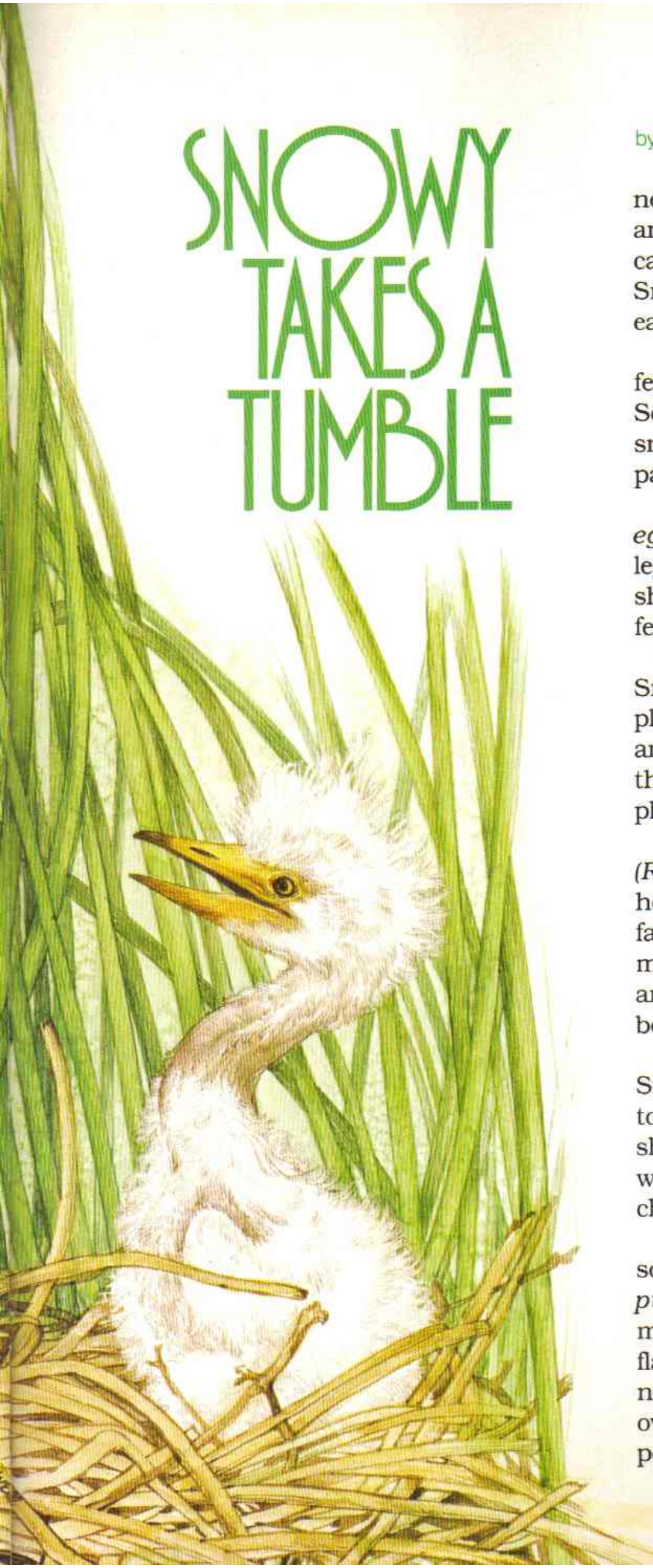
This unusual tree has been around for millions of years. Those that exist today may live for hundreds of years. Dr. David Livingstone was a famous Scottish missionary and explorer in Africa. In 1858 he carved his name on a baobab tree in Mozambique (Mo-zam-BEEK). The tree is still living and is a national monument in that country. Another baobab tree, in South Africa, is thought to be 1010 years old! Let's hope that all the baobab trees left today will survive for as many years.

The End

Photos by Dr. E. R. Degginger, Graham Pizzey

You and two friends could fit inside this hollow baobab. A legend says that police once held criminals in this Prison Tree.





SNOWY TAKES A TUMBLE

by Joseph J. Branney

Snowy's mother landed carefully on a nest of reeds and sticks. She bent over and coughed up some fish she had caught in the marsh for her chicks. Snowy and the two other chicks tore eagerly at the food. Soon it was gone.

Snowy's mother and father took turns feeding and watching over the chicks. Sometimes the young birds ate frogs or snakes besides the small fish their parents caught for them.

Snowy and his family were *snowy egrets*. Snowy's parents had long thin legs that were good for wading in the shallow water of the marsh. Their yellow feet were nicknamed "golden slippers."

People used to hunt adult egrets like Snowy's parents for their beautiful white plumes, or feathers. But now the egrets are protected, so the feathers can stay on the birds instead of being used for plumes on women's hats.

Here in the *nesting colony* or *rookery (ROOK-uh-ree)*, other snowy egrets, herons, and ibises lived near Snowy's family. Like the snowy egrets, the other marsh birds made their nests of reeds and rushes. The nests rested on bent-over reeds in the marsh.

When it got too hot in the marsh, Snowy and the other egret chicks crawled to the edge of the nest to find some shade. Often one of Snowy's parents would stand on the nest to shade the chicks with its wings.

One afternoon there was a strange sound in the marsh: *Putt, putt, putt, putt, putt.* What was that? A flock of marsh birds took off from their nests, flapping their wings. Frightened by the noise and commotion, Snowy fell right over the edge of the nest. *Splash!* The people passing by in the motorboat

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probably didn't know that the noise would scare so many birds.

Dripping wet, Snowy crawled out of the shallow water onto some reeds. He looked up at the nest. It was only two feet above him. But it looked very far away. He called as loudly as he could. His father looked down and called back to him.

Snowy tried to climb up the reeds to the nest but he couldn't. At that point it was all he could do just to stay out of the water. He was lucky that no hawks or crows knew he was there. They like to eat egret chicks whenever they can.

Snowy's mother came back to the nest with more food for the egret chicks. Snowy could hear the two other chicks in the nest. They were squawking as they gobbled up the fish. He called out loudly, but his parents seemed to have forgotten him. That night Snowy missed his dinner. He was *very* hungry.

All through the night Snowy crouched in the reeds. A large snapping turtle swam close but went on its way. Luckily no raccoons came near enough to find out they could have a chick for dinner.

Shortly before dawn Snowy's mother flew off to fish for breakfast. Snowy was so hungry that he was beginning to feel weak. He heard his mother's call overhead as she flew back to the nest.

Instead of landing on the nest, Snowy's mother landed in the reeds next to Snowy. She lowered her head and coughed up three fish for him. The hungry chick gulped down all three. Then his mother stepped toward the nest. The reeds bent underneath her as she walked. Snowy's father and the other two chicks greeted her as she stepped back onto the nest.

Snowy was very lucky that his mother had brought him some food. Most egret parents won't feed a chick that has fallen out of the nest. The chick usually doesn't last very long before it starves or is eaten by a hungry animal.

Snowy now had eaten, but he was not yet out of danger. Though the nest was still above his head, the reeds his mother had bent gave him a new chance. He tried to climb about on the reeds, using his bill as well as his toes to keep his balance. It was hard work. Step by step, he made his way up the reeds. Although he wobbled as he climbed, he didn't fall. Finally he made it back to the nest.

Soon Snowy and the other two egret chicks would all be strong enough to climb in and out of the nest with ease. But what a way to learn! *The End*

Drawings by Linda K. Powell

Photo by James H. Robinson

Bubbling
up from the cool mud
of the soggy pond
I've come to squat a bit
in the sun, blinking,
to sing a plump song.

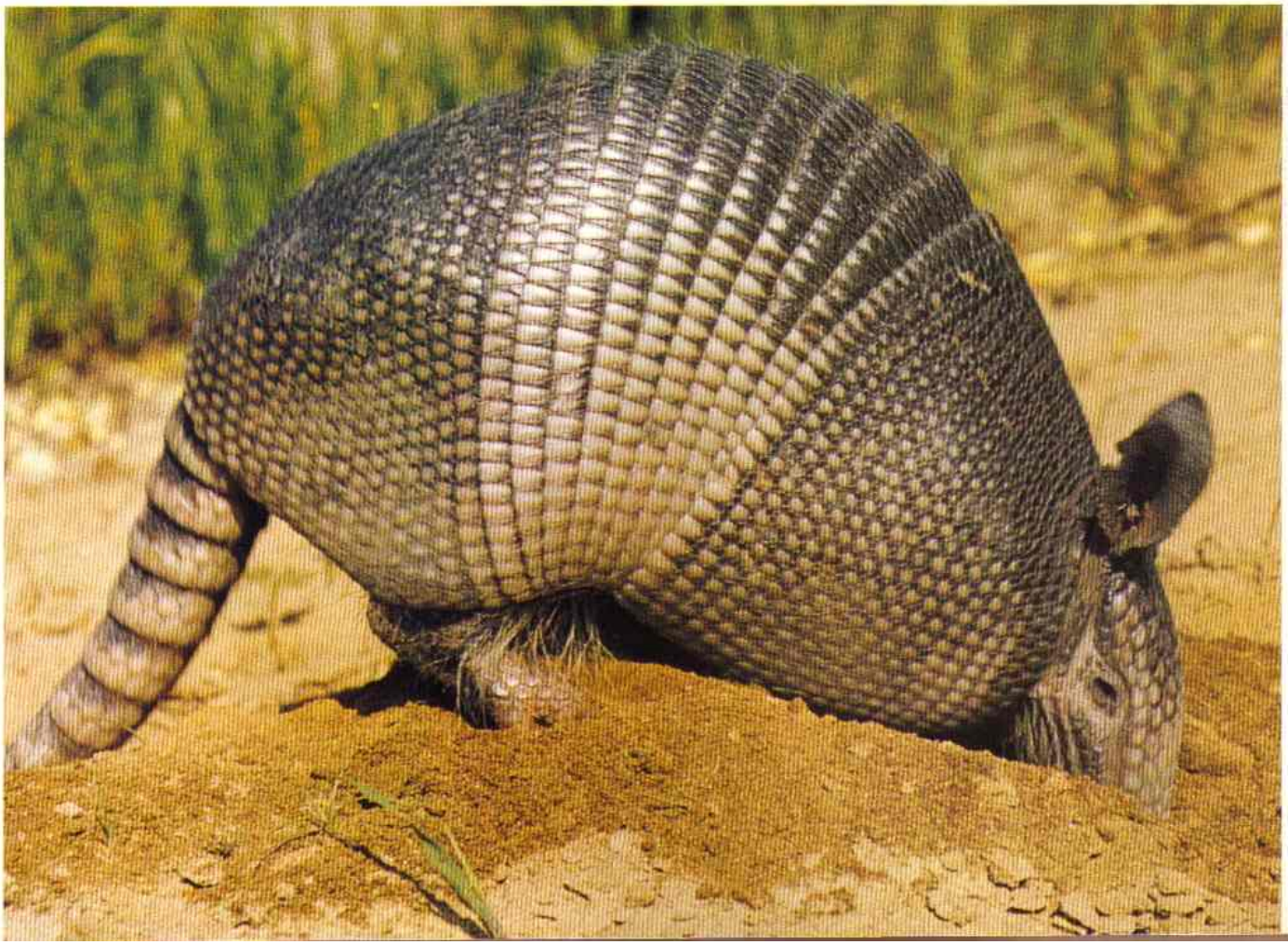
Bullfrog, me,
I might jump a fat jump,
plop down, pull in
a bug with a flick of
my tongue. Then—
plunk—I'll be gone.

—Bet Hennefrund

by Alice Putnam

When night comes, a creature the size of a large house cat climbs from his burrow. On short stubby legs, Ambrose the armadillo (ar-muh-DILL-o) waddles into the darkness. He halts beside a cabbage palm and then starts hunting for his dinner. He squints his tiny eyes. There is a full moon, but its light isn't much help to him. He has very poor sight — so poor, in fact, that he often bumps into things. He doesn't hear well, either, although his ears, standing out from his narrow head, are big enough. It is a good thing he has such a keen sense of smell. If he didn't he would probably go hungry.

LITTLE PIG IN



Photos by William A. Greer (32T); Leonard Lee Rue, III

With sharp claws he scratches among the dead leaves and weeds covering the ground. He turns the soil over, rooting in it with his nose like a pig. All the while he wheezes and grunts like a pig. As Ambrose moves around in the bushes he makes as much noise as an animal much bigger than he is.

At last he uncovers something good to eat — beetles, one of his favorite foods. He laps them up greedily with his long tongue. He likes fire ants too, and termites and scorpions. Sometimes he eats small snakes. And if he can't find anything else to eat, he will settle for carrion (rotting

After sniffing the air for danger, Ambrose the armadillo will run or dig for safety. If all else fails, he'll just roll into a ball.

ARMOR

meat) or garbage. Like a pig, he isn't fussy about his diet.

The Spaniards gave armadillos their name hundreds of years ago when they first discovered the mammals in America. *Armadillo* comes from a Spanish word that means "little armored one."

The name fits Ambrose perfectly. He is encased in a suit of hard, bony shells. These protect him much as a suit of armor protected a knight long ago. One shell covers Ambrose's head and two cover his body. His tail is covered with hard rings locked together. Connecting the body shells are movable bands. These make it easier for him to move about, or to roll into a ball to protect his soft belly. Ambrose is a nine-banded armadillo, the only kind found in North America. (About 19 other kinds of armadillo live in Central and South America.)

You may think that Ambrose looks odd in his armored outfit. But you should have seen his cousins that lived millions of years ago! They were as large as rhinoceroses and were called *glyptodonts (GLIP-tuh-donts).* They had no trouble defending themselves, for their huge tails had sharp spikes on them. By swinging them they could kill almost anything that dared to attack them. Those armadillos would fight anything.

Today's armadillos certainly won't. Ambrose is afraid of a lot of things. He is not one to stay and fight. Running is more his style. And that's just what he's about to do now. He stands up on his hind legs. He sniffs. His keen sense of smell tells him a bobcat is approaching. He leaves quickly. He sniffs around, looking for one of the many burrows he has made. He uses them to escape from

Please turn the page

his enemies at times like this.

But no burrow is handy. So quicker than you can say *armadillo*, he digs himself a new one!

Once hidden in the hole, he arches his back and wedges himself in tightly. It will be almost impossible for anything to pull him loose, even though the end of his tail is sticking out.

Sometimes when Ambrose is near a small body of water, he can save himself by jumping in and paddling away like a dog. Because his armor is so heavy Ambrose uses a trick to stay afloat. He gulps air and fills his stomach and intestines! Stranger yet, sometimes he just drops to the bottom and *walks* across!

Ambrose has many enemies — raccoons, coyotes, foxes, bobcats or even stray dogs. But he gets along fine with other armadillos. Although he spends a lot of time alone, he often joins as many as 50 armadillos to hunt for food. He even shares his burrow — a long wide tunnel lined with leaves. But he seldom lets in more than a few roommates, and all must be male.

Ambrose is not much of a parent. He leaves the care of the young entirely to his mate. She nurses the babies for two months. During this time they trail along behind her and learn to search for food. The female armadillo has four babies every year, always the same number. And those born in the same litter are always the same sex! They all look exactly alike. They are miniature copies of their parents, but instead of a hard coat, they wear a soft leather-like covering.

This covering grows as the armadillos grow. By the time they are adults their covering has toughened into bony plates. And that's what makes an armadillo such as Ambrose a strange little pig in armor.

The End

How does a "living tank" float? By swallowing air until his belly is like a big balloon!

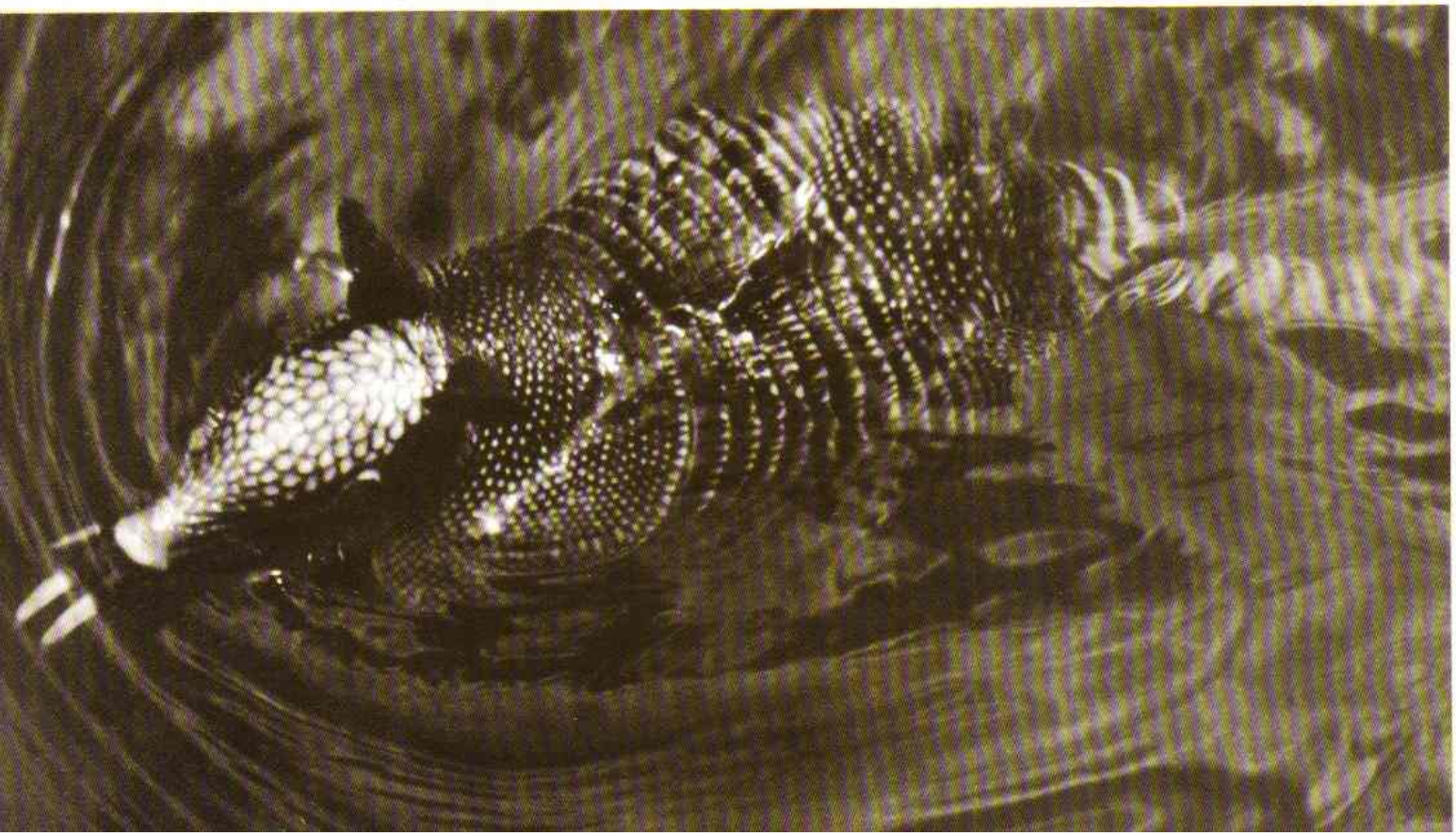
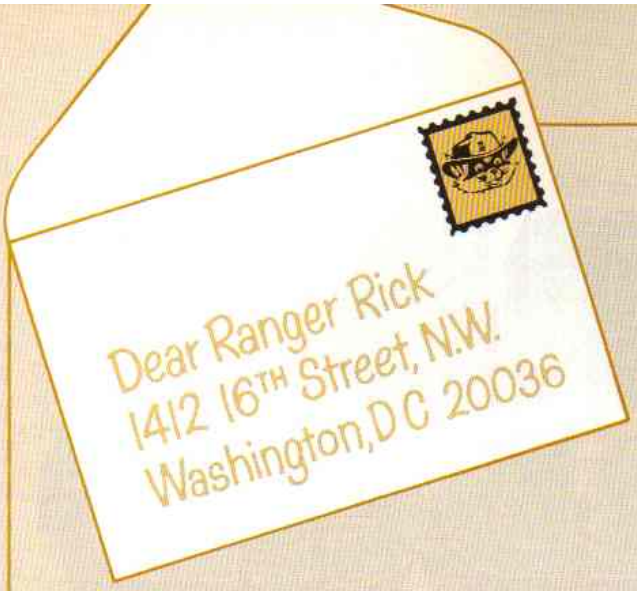


Photo by Jen & Des Bartlett/Bruce Coleman, Inc.



Dear Rangers:

My favorite time of day is when the mailman delivers all your letters, pictures and drawings. I *love* them all! But you know, there are so many, we're getting awfully far behind with our answers. In fact, we'll never catch up. So please don't be disappointed if you don't hear from me. I'll try to answer as many questions as I can. So keep on writing!

R.R.

Dear Ranger Rick:

I live in Cincinnati, Ohio, and I work at the Cincinnati Zoo. I don't get paid but instead I do it as volunteer work. This is a program for kids and I just love it! It is especially for people who love animals as much as I do. This program takes place in a fenced-in area called "The Children's Zoo".

My part in the program is caring for the animals. I make sure people don't harm them.

In our section, called the petting pen, we have one black rat snake, one baby peacock, one boa constrictor, two albino ferrets, two chicks, one turtle, one iguana, a baby raccoon, a woodchuck, two chinchillas, an albino skunk, several dwarf rabbits, baby rabbits, a lop-eared rabbit and some guinea pigs.

We also have another section called the walk-in pen which contains two whitetail deer, a Polish hen, some domestic chickens, one goat and six sheep.

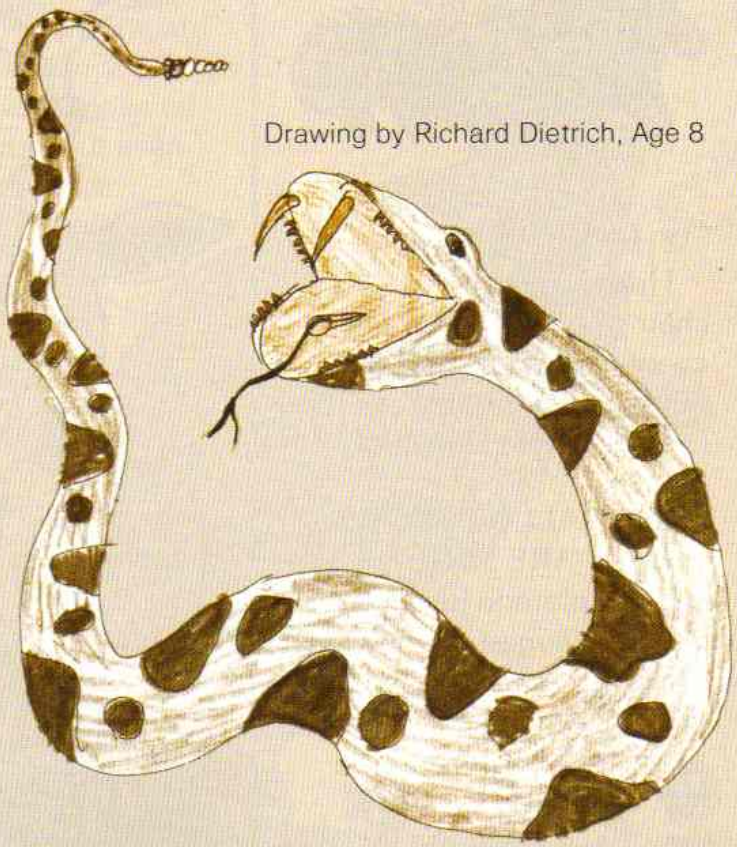
I am also in another program called security. In this program I make sure no one is harming the zoo's gorillas in their new gorilla display. I see to it that no one is harming the white tigers in that display. I also answer questions about both if I am asked. I hope to become a zoologist or something in that field. These programs are great experiences!

Kathy Solte, Age 14, Cincinnati, OH

Dear Ranger Rick:

In the February 1979 issue on page 35 it says newspaper is good for hamsters' cages. It isn't. It poisons them. Use cedar or pine wood chips. Chris Osborne, Age 11, Mequon, WI

You're right Chris — we goofed! Newspaper may poison hamsters and it does not soak up moisture well, so the cage can become damp. Dampness can make your pet sick. R.R.



Drawing by Richard Dietrich, Age 8

RANGER RICK'S WILD WONDERS

by Gerry Bishop

WHO'S THE GREATEST?

Heavyweight boxing champ Muhammed Ali (and every other human) has 639 muscles. Skinny little caterpillars have more than 4000!

NOT ALL MINNOWS ARE MINI

The Colorado River squawfish is the largest minnow in the world. It can grow to be six feet (2 m) long and weigh as much as 80 pounds (35 kg)! This surely is one minnow you'd never use for bait.

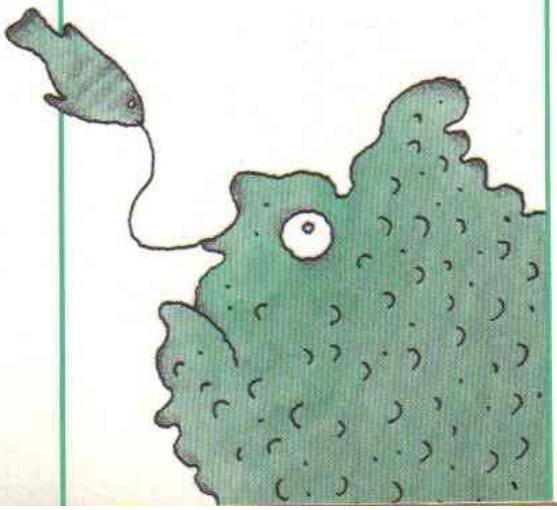
NECK AND NECK

Which animal has more neck bones — a giraffe or an English sparrow? It's the sparrow with 14—twice as many as the giraffe.

A FISH THAT FISHES WITH A FISH

Scientists have just discovered one of the most amazing animals in the world. Around the Philippine Islands lives a very special kind of anglerfish. The female carries her own fishing rod—a long spine that sticks out from her head. Growing on the tip is a piece of flesh. The flesh is colored and shaped almost exactly like a small fish—fins and all!

By waving the fake fish back and forth, the anglerfish lures real fish close to her huge mouth. At the last moment, *gulp!* The victim is gone in a flash.



Drawings by Lionel Kalish

A SNAIL THAT SAILS AT SEA

The amazing *Janthina (JAN-thuh-nuh)* snail builds its own boat! First it uses its "foot" to capture air bubbles from the water's surface. Then it covers the bubbles with slime, which hardens in the air. This forms a little raft, upon which *Janthina* hangs and floats around on the sea.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Most seeds live for a few months or even a few years before getting a chance to sprout. But the world record for waiting goes to a few Arctic lupine (LOO-pin) seeds. A miner discovered the lupine seeds lying frozen deep in the Arctic tundra. He gave them to scientists, who put them in a warm wet dish. After only two days some of them began to grow.

The scientists could hardly believe it. Why? Because the seeds were 10,000 years old!

AN A-*MAZE*-ING TREE

Far off in South America lives a very strange tree. Its branches grow very close together and are covered by needle-sharp leaves. It is such a maze for animals to climb through that it's called the monkey puzzle tree.

EYE, EYE, MATE!

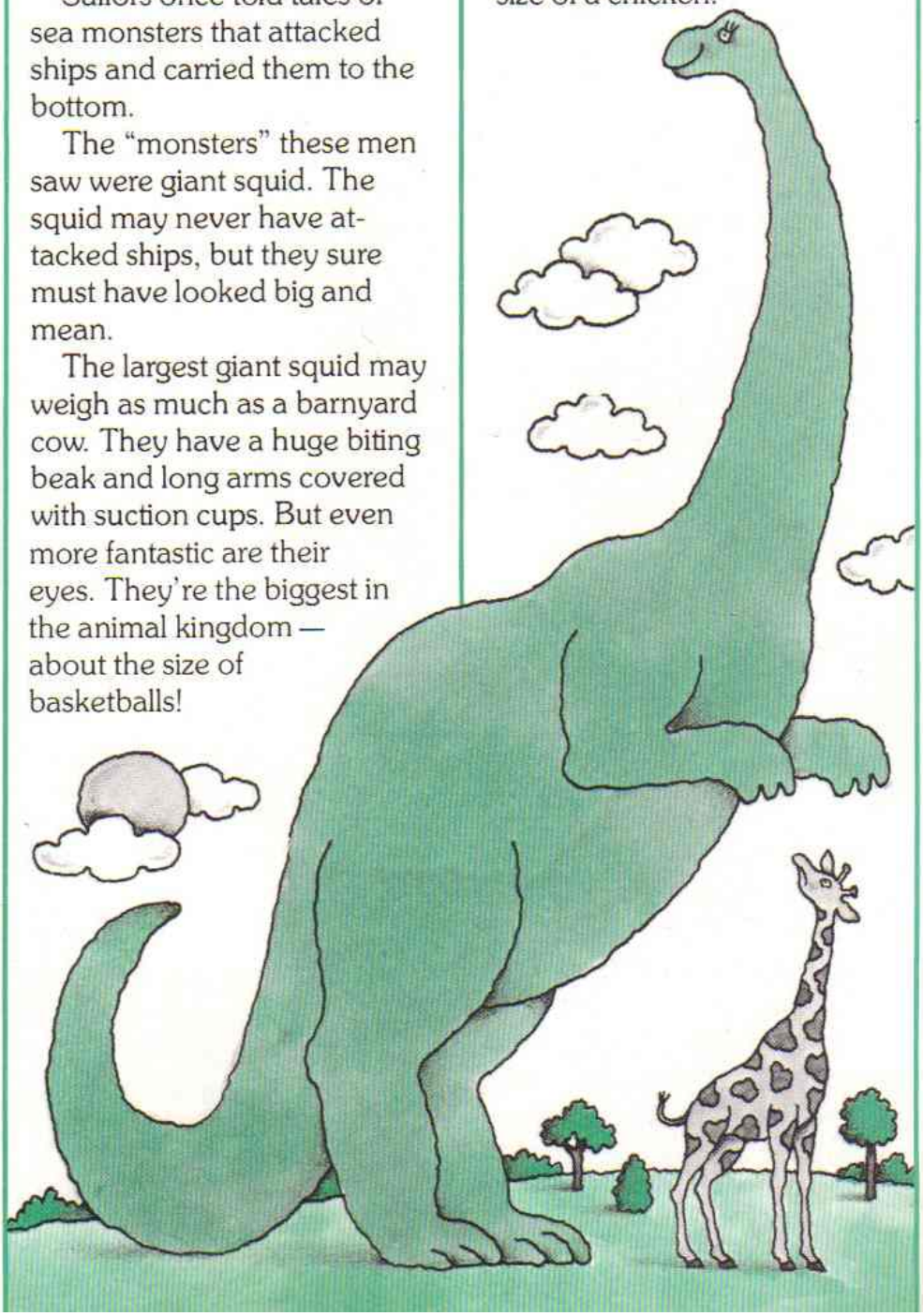
Sailors once told tales of sea monsters that attacked ships and carried them to the bottom.

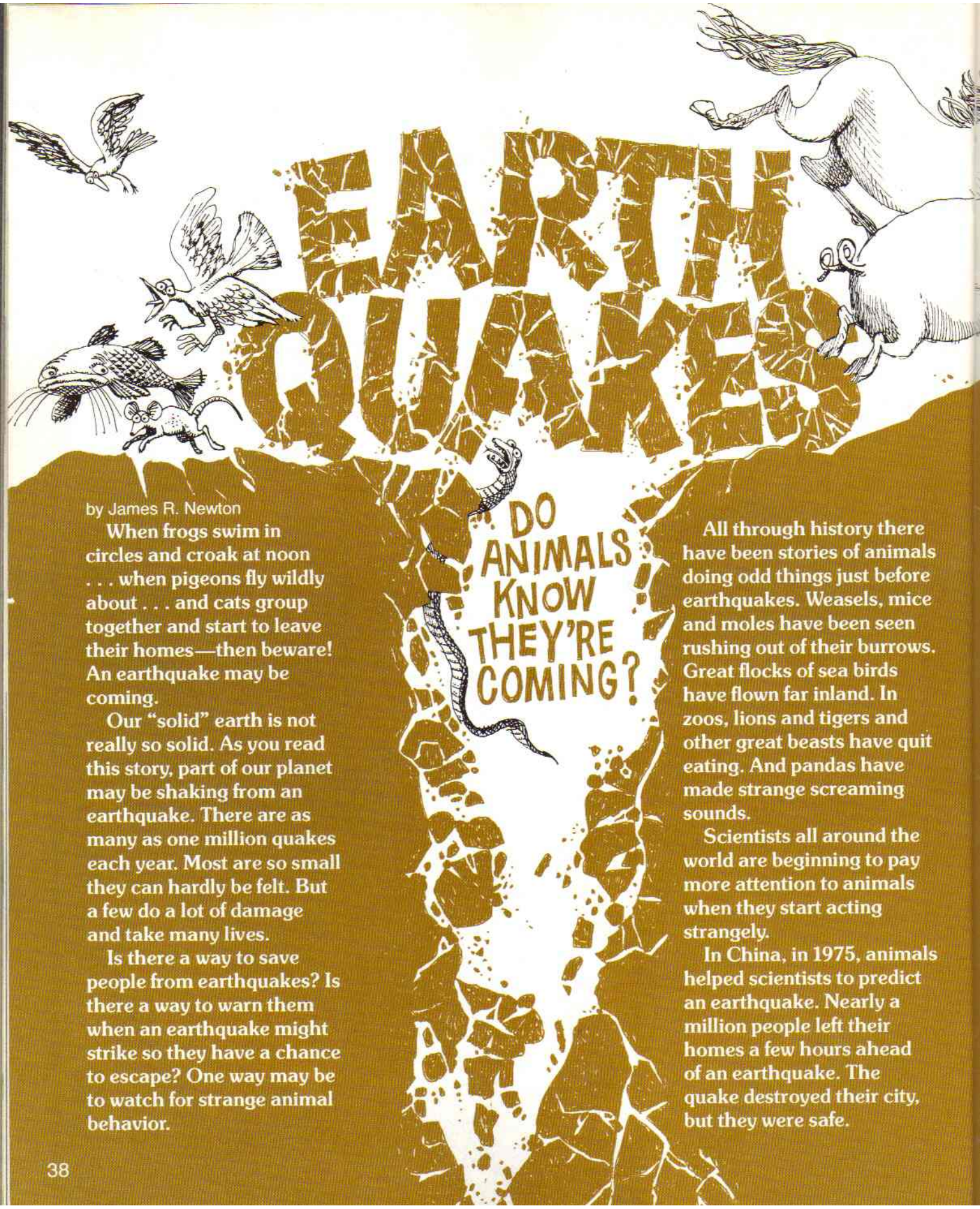
The "monsters" these men saw were giant squid. The squid may never have attacked ships, but they sure must have looked big and mean.

The largest giant squid may weigh as much as a barnyard cow. They have a huge biting beak and long arms covered with suction cups. But even more fantastic are their eyes. They're the biggest in the animal kingdom — about the size of basketballs!

BIG AND TINY TERRORS

The word *dinosaur* means "terrible lizard." But some dinosaurs were more terrible than others. The largest was *Supersaurus*. It was three times taller than a giraffe and weighed as much as 15 elephants. The smallest was *Compsognathus (comp-SOG-nuh-thus)*, about the size of a chicken!





by James R. Newton

When frogs swim in circles and croak at noon . . . when pigeons fly wildly about . . . and cats group together and start to leave their homes—then beware! An earthquake may be coming.

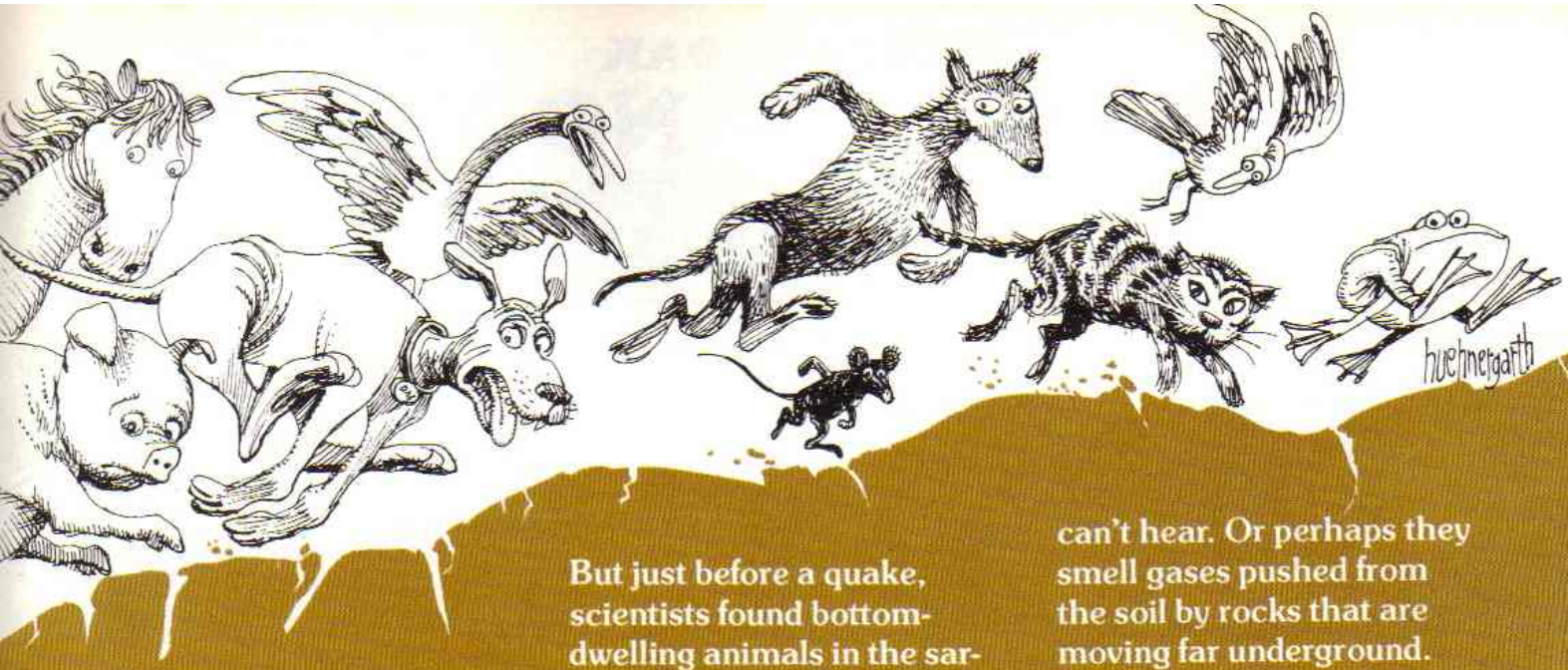
Our "solid" earth is not really so solid. As you read this story, part of our planet may be shaking from an earthquake. There are as many as one million quakes each year. Most are so small they can hardly be felt. But a few do a lot of damage and take many lives.

Is there a way to save people from earthquakes? Is there a way to warn them when an earthquake might strike so they have a chance to escape? One way may be to watch for strange animal behavior.

All through history there have been stories of animals doing odd things just before earthquakes. Weasels, mice and moles have been seen rushing out of their burrows. Great flocks of sea birds have flown far inland. In zoos, lions and tigers and other great beasts have quit eating. And pandas have made strange screaming sounds.

Scientists all around the world are beginning to pay more attention to animals when they start acting strangely.

In China, in 1975, animals helped scientists to predict an earthquake. Nearly a million people left their homes a few hours ahead of an earthquake. The quake destroyed their city, but they were safe.



What kinds of strange behavior did they see? Dogs howled for hours. Geese and ducks flew about wildly. Pigs ran into things and bit off each other's tails. Large numbers of rats suddenly appeared as if from nowhere. Just before the quake, people saw dead snakes on the winter ice. The hibernating snakes had crawled out of their holes and had frozen to death.

Several times, just before earthquakes hit the Soviet Union, shrimps have crawled onto dry land. Millions of ants moved their eggs. Birds cried out in alarm.

Japanese scientists are trying to figure out why fish do strange things before quakes. Catfish normally live on the bottoms of lakes and rivers. But before quakes they have leaped again and again out of the water. Sardines normally feed at the ocean surface. But just before a quake, scientists found bottom-dwelling animals in the sardines' stomachs.

Before quakes in Italy, chickens sometimes refused to go to their roosts. And cattle seemed very frightened and restless.

Before quakes in California, great numbers of rats hurried along the streets. Horses raced around and around in their corrals. At a center for animal study, chimpanzees spent much more time on the ground than in their usual climbing places.

Scientists are trying to figure out what all this odd animal behavior means. Could it be that certain animals are able to sense some changes taking place around them? Maybe they feel the ground tremble a tiny bit before we do. Perhaps these animals sense a very small change in the earth's magnetic or electrical energy. Or maybe they hear sounds coming from inside the earth that humans can't hear. Or perhaps they smell gases pushed from the soil by rocks that are moving far underground.

Scientists want to find out what animals are sensing. When they know this they might be able to build machines that could pick up the same signals.

In the meantime scientists are watching animals closely. Where earthquakes are common, they keep mice, rats and roaches in testing stations. Each day they watch what the animals do.

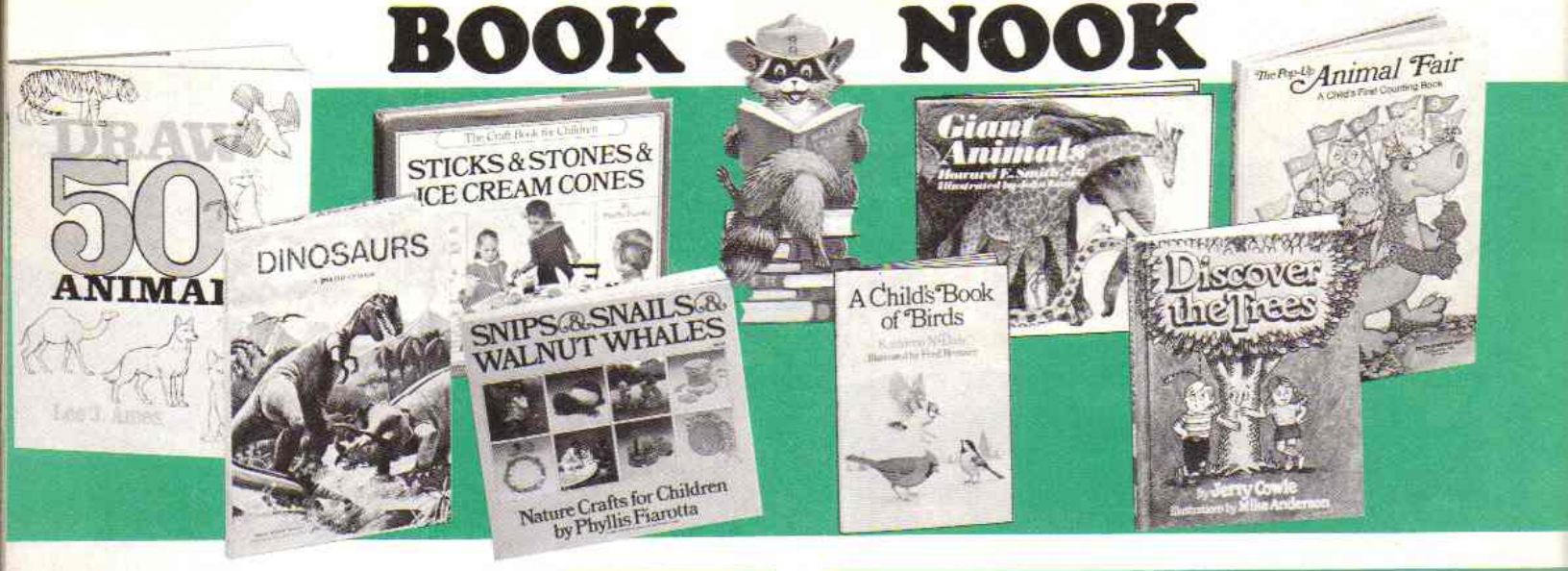
Chinese government officials have told farmers what kinds of animal behavior to look for. Some scientists in America also think it would be wise to study farm animals. What if cows and chickens suddenly gave more or less milk or eggs? It might mean an earthquake is coming.

We can't be sure yet whether animals can tell us the exact times and places of earthquakes. But perhaps someday they will help save many lives.

The End

Drawing by John Huehnergarth

HOLLOW OAK BOOK NOOK



DRAW 50 ANIMALS *by Lee J. Ames.* Easy step-by-step illustrations show how to draw 50 birds, beasts, bugs and fishes in this delightful book of instruction about the animal world. Perfect for budding artists and for rainy day fun. 62 pages, 9″ x 12½″, all ages.

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A CHILD'S BOOK OF BIRDS *by Kathleen N. Daly.* Beautiful drawings — many in full-color — illustrate this small child's guide to the birds to be seen in garden, yard, field or wood. Here are familiar birds of all sizes and shapes, from the tiny hummingbird to soft silent owls. 44 pages, 4½″ x 8½″, ages 3-7.

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GIANT ANIMALS *by Howard E. Smith.* Imagine a worm twenty-two feet long? Or a clam as big as a suitcase? They really do exist, and this lively, illustrated book tells all about them, and many other huge creatures that inhabit the world. 59 pages, 9¼″ x 7¾″, ages 6-10.

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DISCOVER THE TREES *by Jerry Cowle.* Do you know what tree can help your toothache? Or which one has knees? Entertaining text and charming illustrations give you the answers to these and many other questions about the fascinating world of trees. 96 pages, 6¾″ x 8½″, ages 8-12.

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THE POP-UP ANIMAL FAIR. Children will love these delightful and fanciful three-dimensional pop-up pictures that show "Two kangaroos making stews" and "Three wise owls sewing towels" and more in this colorful and fun-filled counting book. 7¾″ x 10¾″, all ages.

64166-2GE Non-members $4.95
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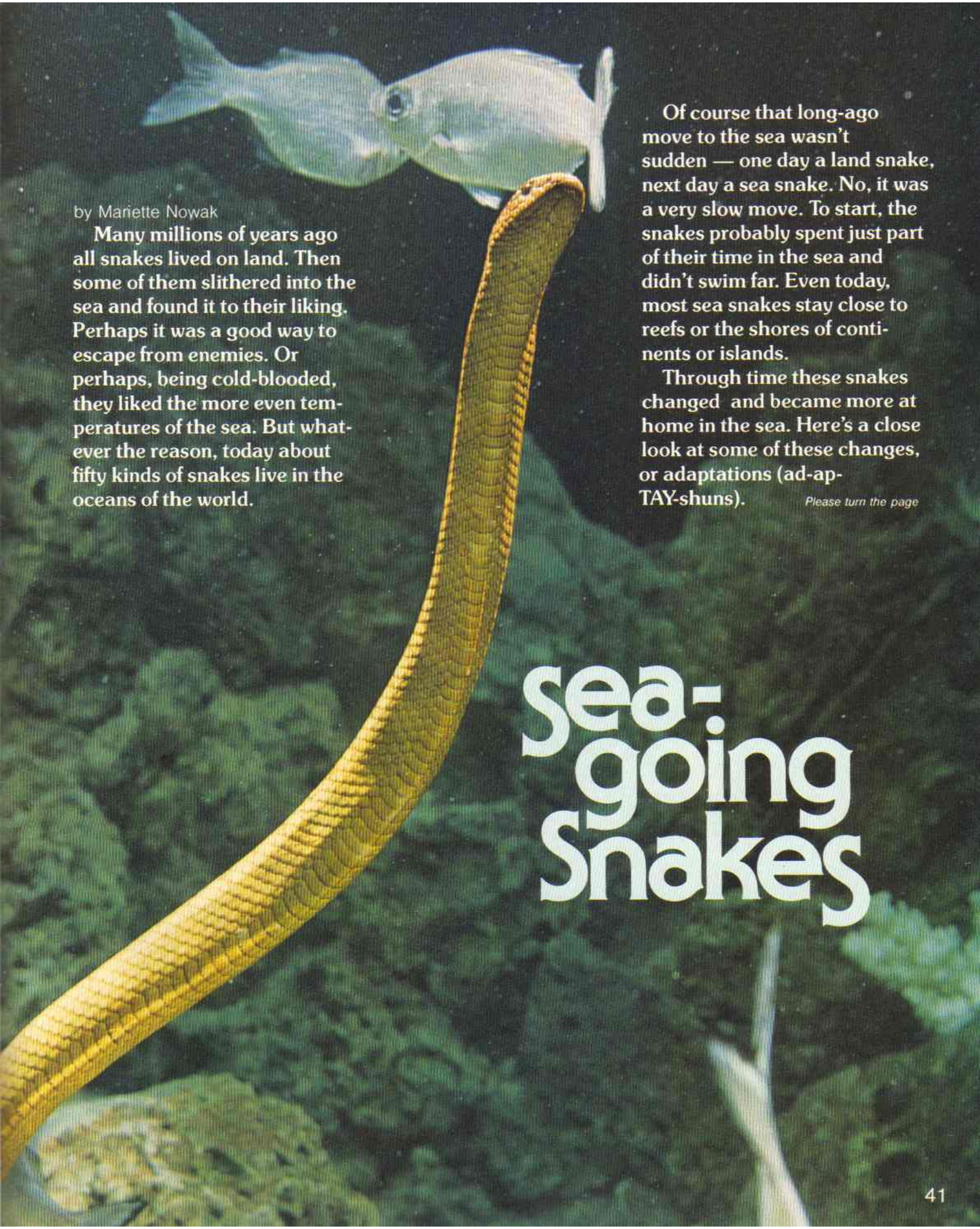

sea-going Snakes

by Mariette Nowak

Many millions of years ago all snakes lived on land. Then some of them slithered into the sea and found it to their liking. Perhaps it was a good way to escape from enemies. Or perhaps, being cold-blooded, they liked the more even temperatures of the sea. But whatever the reason, today about fifty kinds of snakes live in the oceans of the world.

Of course that long-ago move to the sea wasn't sudden — one day a land snake, next day a sea snake. No, it was a very slow move. To start, the snakes probably spent just part of their time in the sea and didn't swim far. Even today, most sea snakes stay close to reefs or the shores of continents or islands.

Through time these snakes changed and became more at home in the sea. Here's a close look at some of these changes, or adaptations (ad-ap-TAY-shuns).

Please turn the page

Sea snakes are built for diving — to find food or to check out a photographer. Flaps cover their nostrils and close to keep out salt water.

The tails of sea snakes, unlike those of land snakes, are flattened from side to side like paddles. This helps them to swim better. Some sea snakes also have flattened bodies.

Another nifty adaptation for swimming is the way the scales cover a sea snake's body. The scales of land snakes overlap a lot. But in many sea snakes there is much less overlapping. In others, there is none at all. Instead, their scales are nothing but little buttons. This may make their bodies more streamlined for slipping swiftly through the water.

Almost all sea snakes have nostrils set on the top of their snouts. This means that only a bit of their body shows when they come up for air. All the better to avoid the sea birds which sometimes dive down and catch them for food. Trouble is, this doesn't save the sea snakes from their biggest enemy — sharks!

When swimming beneath the surface, sea snakes can close their nostrils to protect themselves from still another enemy—salt water. If too much salt soaks into their bodies it can act like a poison. Their mouths, too, can close tightly. In land snakes, the jaws don't fit together as well. The skin of sea snakes is saltproof. And their tongues are covered with three layers of skin.

If too much salt does soak into their bodies, sea snakes have a special way to get rid of it. A special gland hidden beneath the tongue takes salt from the blood and gives it back to the sea. Without this gland, sea snakes could not survive.

At least one kind — the yellow-bellied sea snake—has a special way of cleaning itself. Since it never comes ashore, it doesn't have rocks and shrubs on which to rub as do land snakes. So the yellow-bellied sea snake twists and wriggles like a living pretzel — it ties itself in knots! With different parts of its own body, it rubs off dirt, old skin and

Please turn the page

Like land snakes, sea snakes can creep through the tightest places. But unlike land snakes, they have flattened tails that push them through the water.

Photos by Tom McHugh/Photo Researchers (41); Ben Cropp/Tom Stack & Assoc. (42); Douglas Faulkner; Ken Lucas

small animals and plants that cling to it.

Some sea snakes must come ashore to lay their eggs. Others, even better suited to ocean life, never need do so. Their young are born live in the open sea. From the moment the young are born, they are able to swim and find their own food.

Most sea snakes eat eels and other fish. The yellow-bellied sea snake lies quietly like a stick on the water's surface. Here it waits for its lunch to come swimming by. When a fish gets close enough, the sea snake will swing its head to catch it. Other kinds may trap small fish in rocky crevices with folds of their bodies.

Sea Snakes in Trouble

At times some kinds of sea snakes gather together. Thousands of snakes, twisted thickly together, were once seen covering an area 10 feet (3 m) wide and 60 miles (96 km) long!

Egg-laying snakes will often group on islands to mate. Fishermen in the Philippines collect these snakes. They sell the meat for food and the skins for leather. Recently the fishermen have been taking too many snakes. So now the snakes need protection from the government.

Sea snakes are close relatives of the land-living cobras. Like cobras, they are poisonous, only more so. The poison, or venom (VEN-um), of some sea snakes is more powerful than that of any other snake in the world. But many sea snakes are easygoing and afraid of people. They bite only when bothered — usually after being stepped on or handled roughly. Even when they do bite, they do not always inject their poison.

Sea snakes, though the most poisonous of snakes, are not the huge sea serpents about which old tales have been told. Those stories are not true. Real sea snakes are usually about as long as you can reach with outstretched arms. A few are up to three times that long.

Sea snakes live in great numbers in the Indian and Pacific oceans. But none has ever been found in the Atlantic Ocean. This most puzzling fact has interested scientists. They know that the snakes are warm-water animals. So they think the snakes cannot stand to travel through the cold waters near Antarctica, which separate the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

But there is certainly no puzzle about why these snakes live so well in the sea — a place so different from land. Their many adaptations to ocean life have brought them their success. If they had not changed, sea snakes would not be here today. I'm glad they made it, aren't you? *The End*

Fishermen of the Philippines catch sea snakes for meat and skins. They often catch too many, and now some kinds are getting rare.

Photo by Edward S. Ross

Believe it or not, I just saw a bunch of *wild animals* roll through town! They were in a huge painting on the side of a Clipper Exxpress Company trailer truck.

What was going on? Here's what I found out: This art show on wheels all started in Chicago in 1971. The boss of Clipper Exxpress, Mr. Jerry Chambers, decided to do something special for wildlife. So he hired Ricardo Alonzo's community art center to start painting wildlife on some of his trailer trucks.

What a great project! It gives jobs to students from poor families. It helps the students learn about painting and wildlife. And it's urging everyone to help animals. That's a whole truckload of good news!

So keep your eyes open. Someday soon you may see wildlife on wheels roll into *your* town!

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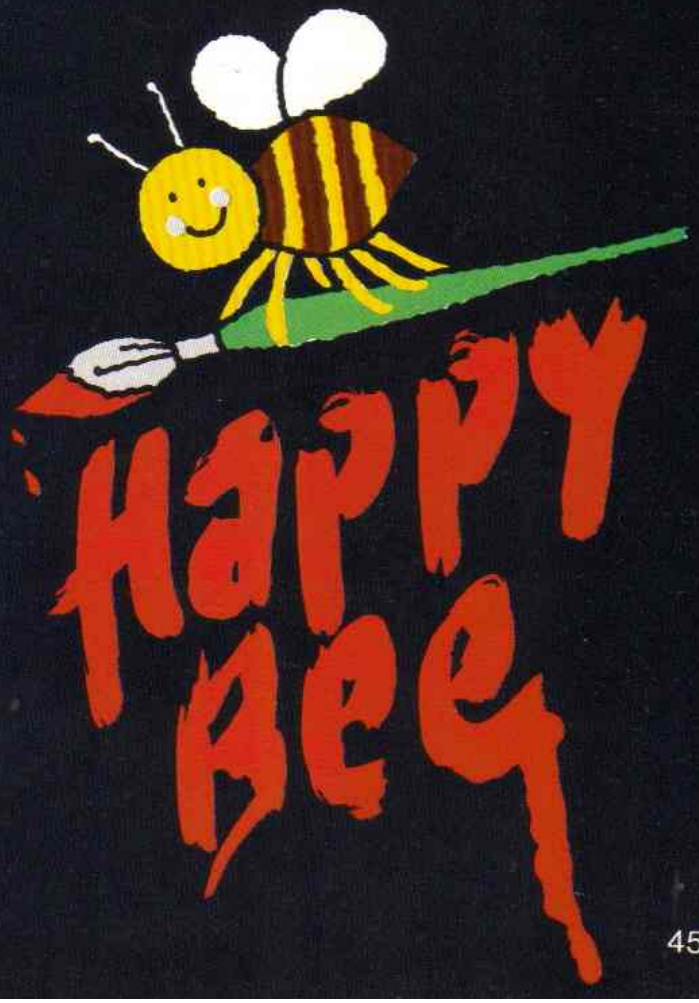

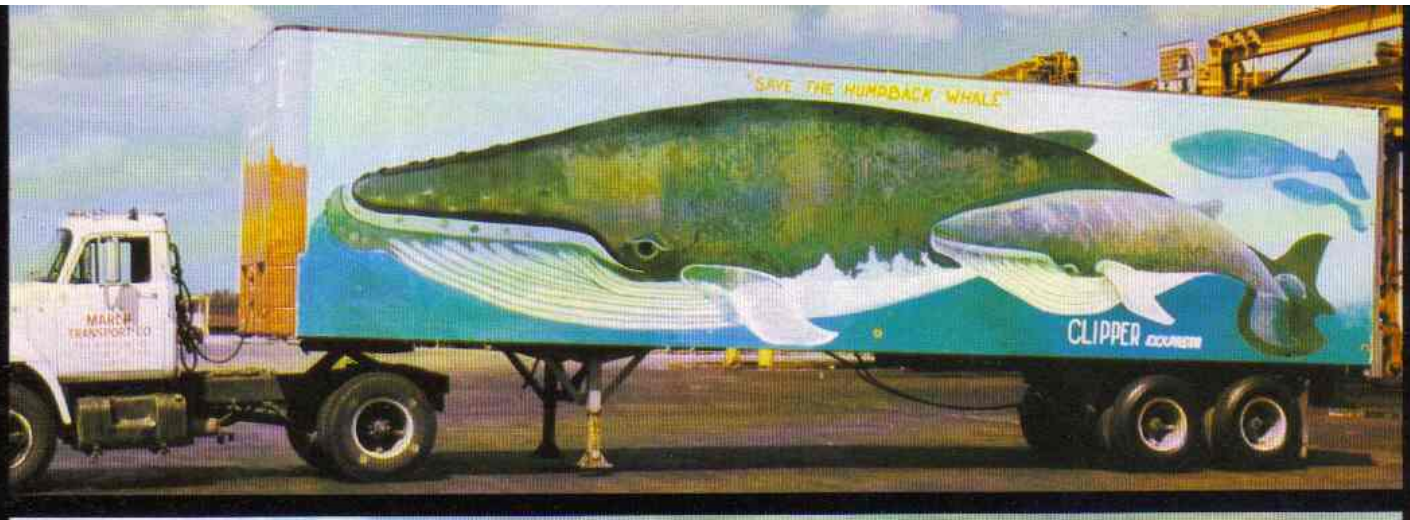
"SAVE THE HUMPBACK WHALE"
CLIPPER

SAVE OUR ELEPHANTS
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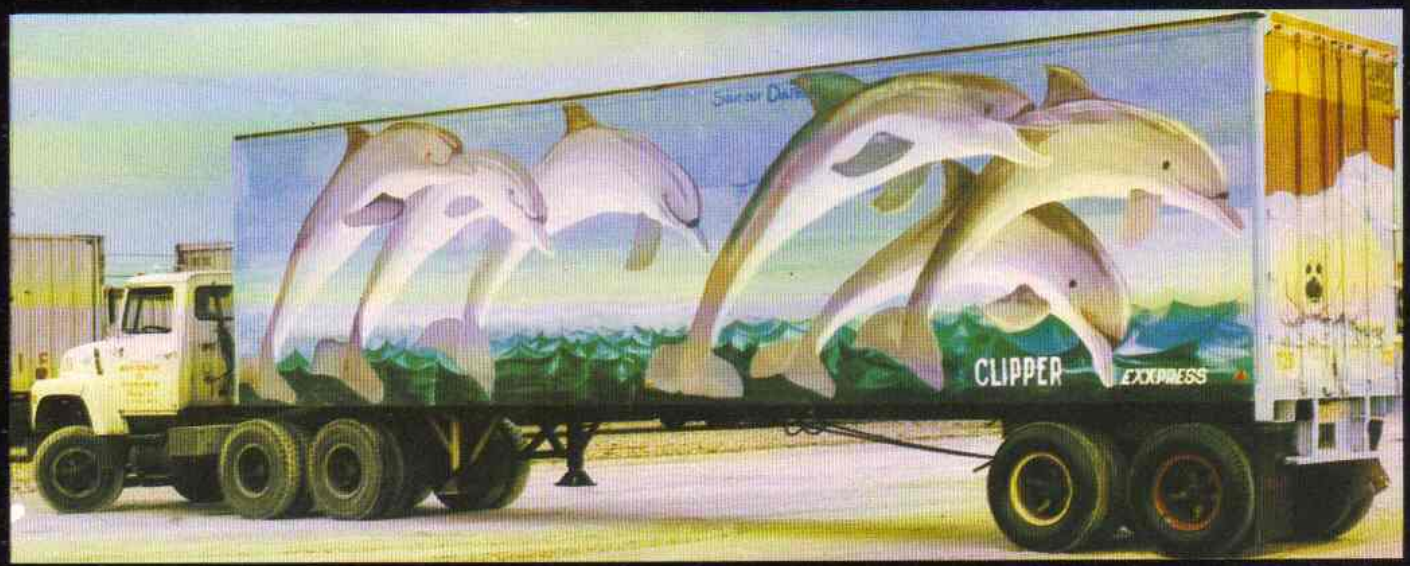
CLIPPER EXXPRESS

"SAVE THE EAGLE"
CLIPPER EXPRESS

Photos courtesy Clipper Exxpress

To take pictures underwater you need lots of equipment and skill. First comes diving gear; then special camera and flash; next a little food to attract a subject, like these garibaldi fish in the kelp beds off the coast of California.